

NEW YORK, JULY 2, 1926

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FAME

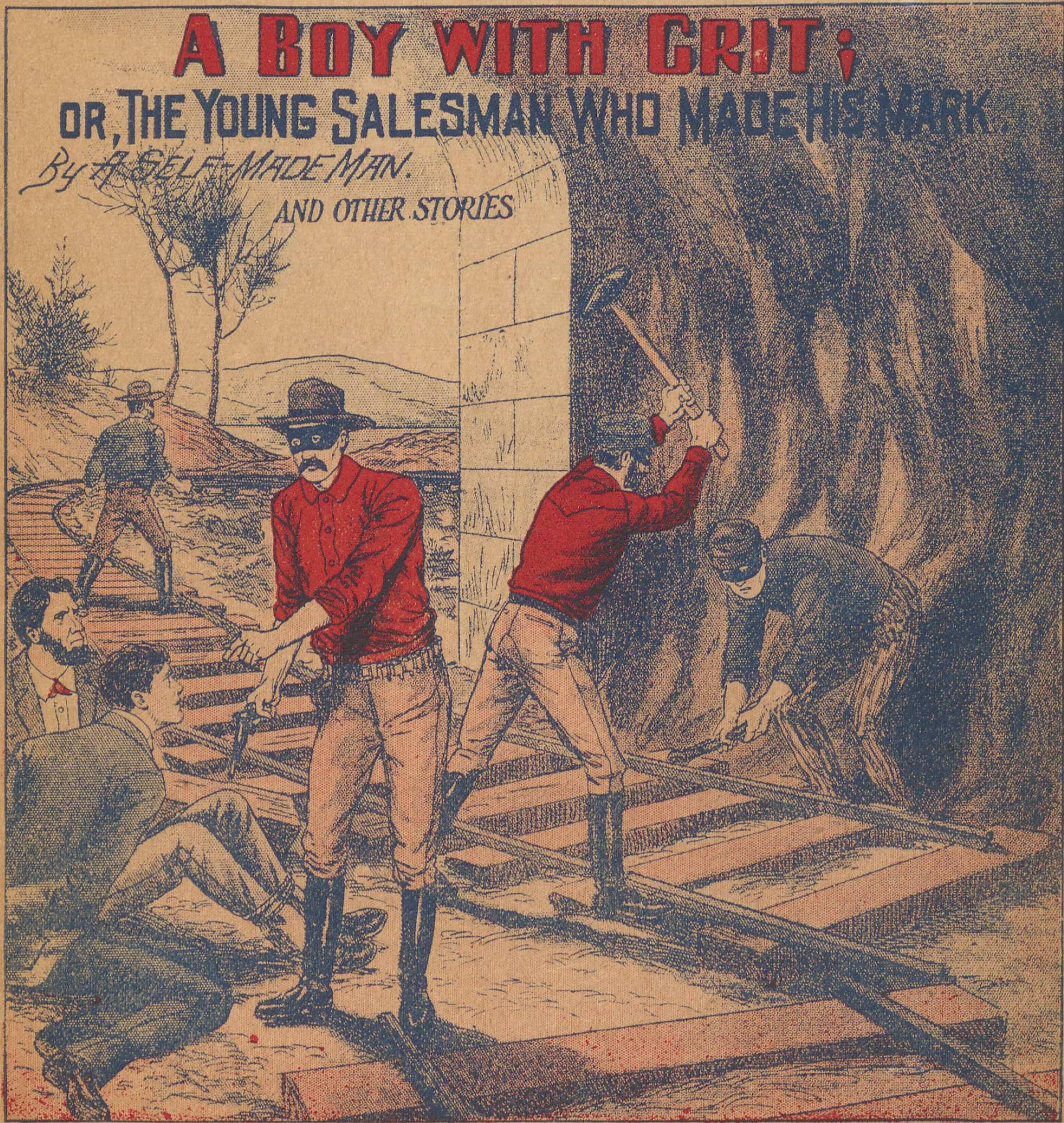
AND

FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

A BOY WITH GRIT; OR, THE YOUNG SALESMAN WHO MADE HIS MARK.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.
AND OTHER STORIES



"Want to know what we're goin' to do with you chaps?" asked Blizzard, glaring down at Vance Vinton and Murphy, the track-walker. "You'll be tied to them rails with yer back ag'in the rock. How d'y'e like the prospect?"

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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A BOY WITH GRIT

OR, THE YOUNG SALESMAN WHO MADE HIS MARK

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—In Which Our Hero Saves Girtie Garnett.

"Help! Help! Help!"

It was the cry of a girl in mortal terror, and was followed by a succession of shrill screams. These signals of dire distress came from beyond the turn of a country road late on a bright summer afternoon. They reached the ears of a stalwart, good-looking, but rather poorly-dressed boy who was walking along the highway with a small grip suspended over his right shoulder on the end of a stout stick.

The boy's name was Vance Vinton, and he was a stranger in that locality.

The landscape roundabout was a typical rural one of hill and dale, through which a serpentine stream sparkled in the light of the declining sun.

Miles away to the right ran the steel track and wooden ties of a railroad which crossed the stream on a stone culvert, and finally disappeared behind a long stretch of woods, the dark green tint of which relieved the eye in that direction.

The boy's face, hands and garments gave evidence of a long day's tramp upon the country road. The cries and screams ahead, breaking suddenly in upon his monotonous walk, galvanized him into new life. The tired look vanished from his face as he looked up in a startled way, and his stride, which had lacked animation, quickened perceptibly.

"There's something doing yonder," he muttered, a bit excitedly. "Some girl is in trouble, and it seems to be mighty serious, too. I guess it's up to me to do what I can for her."

He broke into a run.

"Help! Help! Help!" came the strenuous appeal again, with more screams, more urgent if anything than before.

"Gee! I wonder what's the matter?" breathed the boy, increasing his pace.

Around the turn of the road came a girl, flying at headlong speed, and close behind her came a savage-looking dog, with bloodshot and glaring eyes, and flecks of foam dropping from his open mouth from which protruded a red tongue. He was no common animal, but a half-grown, full-blooded Danish hound. A heavy collar encircled his neck from which depended a broken chain that stirred up the dust as he flew along after the girl.

"Save me! Oh, save me!" shrieked the girl, as

her frightened eyes made out Vance Vinton advancing on the run.

Vance didn't require a second appeal to his chivalrous young nature. He was a boy of grit and courage, and the spectacle before him aroused all his energies.

Dumping his grip into the road without stopping he dashed between the girl and the animal, and with a lightning sweep of his heavy stick fetched the hound a blow between the eyes that brought him down on his haunches. Before the animal could rise he swung the stick again, and a second thud laid the animal out, stiff and senseless. Making sure that the animal was hors de combat, Vance turned around to reassure the girl, who had fallen in a dazed heap in the dust.

She sobbed and trembled violently as he picked her up. Though an exhausted and somewhat bedragged little wreck of her natural self, Vance could see with half an eye that she was a bewitching little beauty.

"Brace up, miss," he said in a reassuring tone. "You are safe."

"Safe!" she cried with a shudder. "Where is Prince?"

"Prince!" ejaculated Vance. "Oh, you mean the dog?"

"Yes, yes."

"I laid him out as flat as a pancake with my stick."

"You did! How brave you are!" she cried admiringly. "You saved my life."

"I won't say I didn't, for he looked mighty vicious. Is he your dog?"

"No. He belongs to Arthur Hoover. Did you kill him?" she added, glancing fearfully at the senseless beast.

"I don't know, and I don't care, for that matter. If I did, he didn't get any more than was coming to him."

"Arthur will be terribly angry."

"I can't help that. The dog would have bitten you—maybe badly. I suppose he broke his chain."

"Yes."

"He looks like a valuable animal, but the owner should have taken extra precautions with such a savage brute."

"Arthur says he's worth \$500. He'll be crazy if the dog is dead."

"Well, I'm not going to apologize for laying him

out. It was your life against the dog's, and I guess you're the most important of the two."

"Yes, yes. I'm very grateful to you."

"That's all right. You're welcome. Can I do anything more for you?"

"I should like you to go home with me. I feel weak and frightened yet."

"I will do so with pleasure, miss."

"Thank you. My name is Gertie Garnett."

"And mine is Vance Vinton."

"You are a stranger in this neighborhood?"

"Yes."

"Are you walking to the station? It's a long distance from here—all of seven miles."

"No. I'm looking for Berkeley village, where I intend to stay for the night."

"That is a mile ahead on this road. I live in a big house this side of it. My father is president of the Berkeley Bank. Are you coming to visit any one in the village?"

"No, I'm making my way to New York as best I can."

"You're not walking to New York?" she ejaculated in astonishment.

"Well, I was under the impression that I was," he laughed.

"Why, New York is 200 miles from here."

"Then I'm more than half-way there."

"Why, how far have you walked?"

"About 250 miles."

"My goodness! You don't mean that?"

"Yes, I do. I come from Blanktown, and I've walked every step of the way."

"Why?" she asked, with evident curiosity.

"Because I'm hard up, for one thing."

"Haven't you any money?"

"I've ten cents."

"Is that all?"

"That's all," he replied cheerfully.

"And where do you expect to stay at the village?"

"At the hotel, if there's one there, if the proprietor will let me work out my supper, breakfast and a bed."

"You shan't do any such thing. You shall stay at our house. You saved my life, and my father and mother will be glad to help you in any way they can."

"I'm much obliged, but I wouldn't like to put them to any inconvenience."

"How can you say that? Father will insist on your staying."

"If he insists I suppose I can't help myself, but I'm rather a shabby-looking person to accept the hospitality of the president of the village bank."

"Nonsense!" replied Miss Gertie, with a little imperious toss of her shapely head, which showed that she was in the habit of having her own way to a considerable extent. "Come, now, let us go on."

"Very well. I am at your service," said Vance, picking up his grip.

At that moment a dark-featured, rather handsome boy came jogging around the turn in the road. One of his hands was bound up with a handkerchief. Although good looking, his face could hardly be called an attractive one. His habitual expression was not pleasant. He looked as if he thought a whole lot of himself.

"Here's Arthur Hoover now," said Gertie apprehensively. "I'm afraid he'll say harsh things when he sees his dog."

"Oh, there you are, Gertie," said the newcomer. "So Prince didn't hurt you after all. Where is he?"

"There," said the girl, pointing behind.

"Dead!" gasped young Hoover, a black look coming on his face. "Who killed him?"

"I'm not sure that he's dead," replied Vance, speaking up; "but it was me that laid him out."

"You did!" roared Arthur. "How dare you touch my dog? I'll have you arrested."

"I had to hit him to save this young lady's life. He was just about to spring on her when I came up."

"You had no right to strike my dog," snarled the boy furiously. "If you've killed him you shall pay dearly for it."

"I'm not worrying about that," answered Vance coolly. "I had the right to handle the animal in the most effective and quickest way I could under the circumstances. I don't believe anybody will blame me for what I did even if I killed your dog. At any rate I'm willing to take the consequences of my act."

"Who are you, anyway?"

"My name is Vance Vinton."

"You don't belong around here. I believe you're a tramp. My father will have you put in the lockup and sent to prison. My dog is worth \$500. You had no right to kill him. You shall be punished severely for doing so."

Almost frothing with rage Arthur Hoover went over to his animal, which was beginning to show signs of coming to.

"Let us go," said the girl anxiously, for she feared there would be trouble between the boys.

"I'm ready," replied Vance.

So off they went up the road, leaving Hoover with his reviving property.

CHAPTER II.—In Which Our Hero Is Notified That He Is Under Arrest.

"Why are you going to New York?" asked Gertie after they had gone a short distance on their way.

"To make a start in life," replied Vance.

"Couldn't you do that at home?"

"I have no home," answered the boy sadly.

"No home!" she ejaculated in surprise.

"No."

"Are your father and mother dead?"

"They are."

"Haven't you any brothers, or sisters, or relatives?"

"I have no brothers or sisters. I have relatives on my mother's side in New England, but I believe they have never taken any particular interest in me, so I am not going to bother them about my future."

"So you're all alone in the world," she said sympathetically.

"Yes, I'm am alone."

"I'm sorry, for I think you're a nice boy."

"Thank you for the compliment, Miss Gertie, and I think you're the nicest girl I ever met."

"Oh, dear, how can you say that?" said the girl blushingly. "Look how mussed up I am. I am really ashamed to be seen by any one I know."

"You're not mussed up much."

"I think I look frightful."

"Then I don't know what I look like. That boy who owns the dog called me a tramp. I didn't think I looked quite as bad as that, but—"

"You don't look the least bit like a tramp," said Gertie positively.

"I'm afraid you want to let me down easy. However, there is nothing of the tramp about me other than my shabby appearance. It is no disgrace that I know of for a boy to have to walk because he's got no money to pay railroad fare."

"Father will give you money to buy a ticket to New York."

"No. I wouldn't accept it. As I've walked three-fifths of the way there now I can manage to cover the balance all right."

"Oh, but you mustn't walk any further. I shall insist that you ride the rest of the way."

"You don't know what good exercise walking is," laughed Vance.

"What did you do when the weather was bad?"

"I stayed at farmhouses along my route."

"What do you think of doing in New York?"

"Look for work."

"My father has a cousin in New York in the wholesale furniture business. I'll tell him he must give you a letter of introduction to him. Maybe Mr. Appleby will be able to give you a position in his store."

They were now drawing near the village which lay beyond a dip in the road.

"There is our house," said the girl, pointing at quite a pretentious mansion that stood back from the road in the midst of well-kept grounds. "That other house further on is where Arthur Hoover lives. His father is a lawyer and justice of the peace, and is very well off. Arthur goes to a boarding academy in Haywood, some distance from here. He is home on his summer vacation."

"I suppose you and he are particular friends?"

"No. I don't like him much. He is not a pleasant boy, but as his parents are rich, and of importance in the neighborhood, my father and mother encourage his visits at our house. I wouldn't mind if he never come. He can be very disagreeable sometimes."

Gertie led the way to her front gate. Vance opened the gate for her to enter and then hung back.

"Come," she said, "don't stand outside. My father is sitting on the porch reading a paper. I want to introduce you, and tell him how you saved me from a dreadful death."

So Vance followed her up the graveled path to the porch.

"Father," said Gertie, as they ascended the porch, "this is Vance Vinton. He saved me from being killed by Arthur Hoover's dog Prince."

"What!" gasped the village banker. "He saved you from—"

Gertie at once explained how Prince, the Danish hound, had broken his chain and chased her down the road.

"I believe he would have torn me to pieces only for this boy who came to my aid and knocked the dog senseless just as he was about to spring upon me," she said.

The banker got up and seizing Vance by the hand shook it warmly, at the same time expressing his appreciation of the boy's plucky service to his daughter.

"Father, I have invited Mr. Vinton to stay with us till to-morrow. He is on his way to New York, and intended stopping all night in the village. I wish him to stop here, so please make him welcome."

Mr. Garnett at once told Vance that it would give him much pleasure to have his company at the house.

"Come inside and let me introduce you to Mrs. Garnett. Gertie, find your mother and send her into the parlor," he said, leading the way indoors.

Gertie hurried away, found her mother in the dining-room, and acquainted her with the particulars of the stirring adventure she had had down the road. So when Mrs. Garnett entered the parlor she knew how Vance had probably saved her daughter's life, and she thanked him in feeling words, and welcomed him to their home. Vance was shown to a room on the second floor and provided with means to make himself as presentable as possible. Then Gertie took possession of him as her own particular company, and by the time supper was on the table they were talking together like old friends.

Afterward Gertie told her father about Vance's unfortunate pecuniary condition, his purpose in going to New York, and her desire that her father should give him a letter of introduction to his cousin, the furniture man, requesting him to give Vance employment if possible. The banker promised to write the letter and advance the boy money enough to pay his fare to the city by rail, with a sufficient additional amount to keep him until he got a situation.

Vance passed the pleasantest evening of his life with the Garnetts, and they, on their part, did everything they could to make him feel at home.

She made him promise that he would write to her when he reached the city, and let her know how he was getting along, and she assured him that she would answer every one of his letters without fail. Vance prepared to start on his way after breakfast. The banker took him into his library and handed him the letter of introduction to his cousin, Wilford Appleby. Then he gave Vance five ten-dollar bills. The boy at first refused to accept them, but when Mr. Garnett insisted, he accepted them as a loan. The banker admired the lad's independent spirit, and felt sure he would get along in the world all right.

As Gertie and her mother were bidding Vance good-by on the porch, Tompkins, the village constable, opened the gate and came toward the house. The banker looked at the visitor with some surprise.

"What is it, Mr. Tompkins?" he asked.

"I understand that your daughter brought a young man to your house late yesterday afternoon," he said in a respectful way.

"She did. What of it, Mr. Tompkins?"

"Is that the young fellow?" nodding at Vance.
"It is."

"Then I have a warrant issued by Squire Hoover for his arrest."

**CHAPTER III.—In Which Our Hero Meets With
a Bunch of Train Wreckers.**

"Do you mean to say that you have a warrant from Squire Hoover for this lad's arrest?" asked the astonished banker.

"Yes, sir."

"Let me see your warrant," said Mr. Garnett. Tompkins produced it.

"This is made out in the name of John Doe."

"Yes, sir. Arthur Hoover didn't know his name."

"I see Arthur Hoover is the complainant. Al-
leges that the said John Doe, real name unknown
to complainant, did wilfully and maliciously injure
his dog Prince yesterday. Well, officer, the
boy will go with you and so will I. It will be
necessary for you, Gertie, to accompany us as a
witness, so run and get your hat. You need not
feel anxious over this ridiculous charge, Vinton.
When you and Gertie have testified the squire
will have to dismiss the charge."

So the party of four proceeded to Squire Hoover's office on Main Street, where they found the squire, his son Arthur, and quite a bunch of curious villagers. The squire was surprised to see the banker and his daughter appear on the scene, but he made no comment. Arthur hastened to offer Gertie a seat, but she was so indignant because he had caused Vance's arrest that she refused to notice him, much to his displeasure.

Squire Hoover declared the court open as soon as the prisoner was brought in by the constable.

"Prisoner," he said sharply, "are you guilty or not guilty of nearly killing my son's dog, Prince?"

Vance had been instructed by the banker to plead "Not guilty," so he did so.

"Arthur, take the chair. Put your hand on that Bible. You swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

The witness kissed the book and was then requested to tell his story. He had very little to tell. He said that on reaching a certain point on the country road late on the previous afternoon he had found his valuable dog stretched out in the dust apparently dead. The prisoner and Miss Garnett were standing near the animal conversing. He demanded to know who had struck down Prince, whereupon the prisoner admitted that he had done so with his stick.

"Prisoner, what have you to say in your own behalf?" asked the squire severely.

"One moment, please," said Mr. Garnett, rising. "I am here to conduct this boy's defense to a foolish charge, although I am no lawyer. When you have heard the true story of this dog episode you will admit that the prisoner was fully justified in laying out the hound in question. Gertie, take the chair."

Much to the squire's surprise and his son's chagrin the girl took the seat.

"Now, Gertie," said the banker, "tell your story."

She did so, and her tale altered the complexion of affairs very materially. Vance then took the chair and gave his evidence.

"Now, your honor, I move the discharge of the prisoner."

After a whispered consultation with his son the squire reluctantly set Vance at liberty.

Mr. Garnett, Gertie and Vance then left the squire's office, while Arthur watched them go with a face as dark as a thundergust. At the door of the bank Vance bade the banker and his daughter good-by, and started to walk to the station to take the next train for New York.

After he had walked two miles he saw he could save a mile or more by taking a short cut through a patch of woods. Half way through the woods he sat down to rest with his back against a big tree.

While seated there five rough-looking men came up behind him, and stopped on the other side of the tree. They did not observe his presence, and began to talk in ordinary tones among themselves. Vane heard their voices and was about to get up and resume his tramp when he heard one of them say something that attracted and held his attention. He listened intently, and soon discovered that the five men intended to wreck the west-bound express at a tunnel near by, where it was due in an hour. Their object was to secure a box of specie which they knew was aboard the express car. Vance was amazed at the audacity of the rascals, as well as at the villainous character of the enterprise. The problem that naturally occurred to him was how could he defeat the project. The only thing he saw that he could do was to sneak out of the woods and try and flag the express somehow. He started to put that plan in practice, but unfortunately his retreat was noticed by one of the villains and the men started after him. Finding that he had been detected he took to his heels as fast as he could. Running in the woods has many disadvantages, and Vance discovered a few of them. His pursuers, however, were equally handicapped. Vance paid little attention to the direction he was taking, his sole object being to elude his pursuers. When he finally burst out from among the trees he found that he was close upon the railroad, with the river not far away. He turned down the track in the direction the express was coming. The five men came on after him at full swing. Finding that his grip was an obstacle to speed he tossed it under a tree and then spurted. He probably would have got clear, as he was a fine runner, if he hadn't caught his shoe in a mass of creepers, which threw him to the ground with a great deal of force, half stunning him. Before he could get up the biggest of his pursuers came up and caught him bodily around the waist. He easily held the boy until the others arrived. Vance then realized that the game was up.

"So we've got you, eh?" growled the big rascal. Vance looked up at him and said nothing.

"Here, Grundy, tie this chap's hands behind his back," said the big fellow, who seemed to be the leader.

The man addressed as Grundy pulled a piece of stout line out of his pocket and bound Vance's wrists together. Then the big scoundrel yanked the boy to his feet.

"Now, then, march!" he said, forcing Vance to keep pace with them.

In this manner they proceeded to the mouth of the tunnel.

"We'll have to nab the track-walker before we can do anything," said Grundy.

"Right," said the leader, whose name was Dick

Blizzard. "You and Slivers go through the tunnel and catch him. You'll probably find him in his hut at the other end. Be quick about it, for we have no time to lose."

The words were hardly out of his mouth before a medium-sized Irishman, with a pair of galways under his chin, suddenly issued from the mouth of the tunnel, with a red flag rolled around a short stick under his arm. He saw the rascals, and the bound boy laying on the ground.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "What is the matter here?"

"The matter is that you are our prisoner," said Blizzard. "Don't stir, or it'll be worse for you," added the ruffian, drawing a revolver and covering the new arrival. "You're the track-walker, ain't you?"

"Yes, I am."

"Then you're the chap we want."

"What do you want me for?"

"We want to keep you out of mischief," grinned the leader. "Grab him, boys, and tie him so he can't get away."

Before the railroad man could make any move he was tripped up and his arms bound behind his back.

"Now, then, Gallagher, if you utter a sound I'll shoot you," said Blizzard threateningly.

"My name isn't Gallagher. It's Murphy."

"It's all the same to us," chuckled the leader. "Now, boys, get the tools out of the bushes and sail in. Get a move on, for the express is due in a little while."

"What are you going to do?" asked Murphy, the track-walker.

"None of your business, Gallagher, or Murphy, or whatever your name is."

"They're going to wreck the express," blurted out Vance.

Blizzard grinned unpleasantly.

"I knew you'd been spyin' on us, that's why we chased you," he said, with a malevolent glance at the boy. "I reckon you won't do no more buttin' in after we're done with you," he added darkly.

In the meantime Grundy and Blizzard got a sledge-hammer and other implements out of a bunch of bushes, and they, with the other two, proceeded to tear up a small section of track at the mouth of the tunnel. It was soon apparent that these fellows had had experience with railroad tracks. After they had removed four of the rails Vance expected to see them quit work, but they didn't. They began digging up the sleepers, which the boy thought was quite unnecessary for their purpose. Then, to his surprise, as well as Murphy's, they proceeded to lay the sleepers down again in new spots. What were they up to? It was a puzzle to Vance and the track-walker until the men started in to relay the rails they had torn up. Then their purpose was apparent. Their diabolical object was to cause the locomotive of the express to run straight against the side of the rocky tunnel. That would bring about a tremendous wreck of the whole train, and in the confusion of the moment they expected to be able to secure the specie box, and make off with it through the tunnel. Blizzard bossed the job and at the same time kept an eye on the prisoners. As the work was nearing completion he stepped up in front of them.

"Want to know what we're going to do with you chaps?" asked Blizzard, glaring down at

Vance Vinton and Murphy, the track-walker. "You'll be tied to them rails with your backs agin the rock. How d'ye like the prospect?"

The train-wrecker grinned malevolently as the prisoners looked helplessly into his cruel countenance.

"Dead men tell no tales," the man went on. "If we succeed an' people are killed, the evidence of you two would hang us if we are caught. To protect ourselves we intend to put you where you will never appear in court against us!"

CHAPTER IV.—In Which Our Hero Reaches New York and Secures a Situation.

Blizzard turned away to watch the final completion of the dastardly work.

"We're dead men, groaned Murphy, the perspiration coming out on his forehead in great drops as he realized the fearful fate the train-wreckers meant to mete out to him and his young companion. Vance thought so, too, for a moment, but he was a boy of grit, and would not give up to despair even when he struck the last ditch. He pulled desperately at the rope that bound his wrists. It yielded and one hand slipped out. That freed him. Springing to his feet he seized the red flag the track-walker had dropped and darted up the sloping side of the narrow embankment beside the track.

Blizzard turned about quickly and then made a dash at the fleeing boy.

"Stop, or I'll fill you full of holes!" he roared, raising his revolver.

Vance had no idea of stopping. It was better to be shot down than meet the more terrible fate designed for him.

Crack! crack! crack! Three sharp, whip-like reports broke the stillness of the midday air, and as many bullets sped after the boy. One hummed by his ear; a second perforated the top of his derby, while the third went a bit wide.

Before Blizzard could fire again Vance darted in among the trees, and the rascal could not get a fair shot at him. With many execrations the ruffian started in pursuit, but Vance was running not only for his own life but the lives of others, and he put every ounce of energy he possessed into his legs. He soon distanced Blizzard, coming out on the track a quarter of a mile away from the tunnel. Then he heard the distant whistle of the express as it passed a crossing three miles away. When Blizzard reached the track himself he saw that the fleeing boy was out of pistol shot, and could not be recaptured. He gave up the pursuit and hurried back to his men.

"The game is up," he snarled. "That sub will flag the express a mile from here and save it. All we can do now is to light out as fast as we can."

In the meantime Vance kept on down the track till he saw the locomotive of the express come into sight, then he stopped and began to wave the red flag to and fro. The engineer saw the flag, as a matter of course, and shutting off steam whistled down brakes. The train came to a stop close to the spot where Vance stood.

"What's the trouble?" asked the engineer, leaning out of the cab window.

"The track is torn up at the mouth of the tunnel," replied the boy.

"Torn up!" ejaculated the engineer. "How did that happen?"

"Train-wreckers did it."

"What!" exclaimed the engineer.

At that moment the conductor came running up to learn why the express had come to a stop. Vance explained the situation to him, and he was astonished.

"Jump on board," he said to Vance.

The boy sprang into the cab followed by the conductor.

"Go ahead slowly," he said to the engineer, and the train started.

When they drew near the tunnel entrance they saw that Vance had spoken the truth. The conductor, fireman and Vance sprang down and walked forward. The boy rushed to Murphy, the track-walker, and released him. He confirmed Vance's story of what had happened. Train-hands were called up, the train-wreckers' tools were found where they had been thrown into the bushes, and the track was replaced as well as possible. The express went through the tunnel as far as the other end and stopped alongside the track-walker's hut.

There was a telephone in the hut and the conductor communicated with the station agent at the next town ahead, explaining matters, and the agent said he would send down section hands to fix the track properly. The conductor took Vance's name, but the only address he could give the man was care of Wilford Appleby, the furniture man, of New York. The express then went on. Murphy was loud in his praises of Vance's grit, and when he found that the boy was bound for the station, four miles away, to take the train for New York, he said:

"Stop here and I'll flag it for you. You couldn't reach the station in time to catch it now."

So Vance stopped until the train came up eight minutes later, when Murphy stopped it, explained to the conductor how the boy had saved the express, and Vance got aboard. He paid his fare to the conductor, who complimented him on his nerve and said that he would undoubtedly hear from the company after the matter had been reported by the conductor of the express. It was after six in the evening when the train rolled into the depot at New York, and when Vance stepped out on the street, grip in hand, he realized that he was alone in a great city. He asked the first policeman he saw to direct him to a cheap and respectable hotel, and as there was such a one within two blocks the officer walked with him there, handing him out a lot of advice on the way, as Vance admitted that he had never been in a big city before in his life.

Next morning he asked the hotel clerk if he could tell him how he could find Mr. Appleby's place of business. The clerk picked up a business directory, and looking up the wholesale furniture men he pointed Appleby's address out. Vance wrote it down, and after breakfast, which he took at a restaurant on the ground floor of the hotel, he started out to find the store, which was downtown. A Broadway surface car took him within a few blocks of his destination, and then by inquiring his way he finally reached the store. Entering, he asked a clerk if Mr. Appleby was in.

"Just arrived," was the reply. "Do you want to see him?"

"Yes."

"What name shall I tell him?"

"Vance Vinton. Tell him I've brought a letter from Mr. Garnett, of Berkeley."

Vance was invited into the private office and found himself in the presence of a portly man who looked full of business.

"Sit down, young man, and let me see the letter you say you brought to me from Mr. Garnett," said the furniture man.

Vance presented the letter. Mr. Appleby read it and then inspected his caller.

"You come from Blanktown, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Parents living there?"

"No, sir. My father and mother are dead."

"How came you to make Mr. Garnett's acquaintance?"

Vance told him how he had saved Gertie Garnett from the fangs of a ferocious Danish hound. The story made a good impression on the merchant, and he understood what the banker meant when he wrote that he was under a deep obligation to the boy.

"Well," he said, "the only opening I have at present is assistant porter and general office boy. If you wish to accept that you can have it."

"I'm glad to accept anything, sir, where there is a chance for me to work myself up."

"You'll have the chance here; it remains for you to make the best of your opportunities. When did you arrive in the city?"

"Last evening, sir."

"Where are you stopping?"

"At a small hotel on Third Avenue, near Forty-fifth Street."

"Of course you don't expect to remain here. Take the afternoon to look around and find yourself a cheap room. The East Side near Third Avenue is full of them. Look for a place near one of the Third Avenue elevated stations. The trains run up and down every few minutes all day and most of the night. It will afford you a handy mode of transit to this store. In the morning you will report to the head porter ready to go to work. I will introduce you to him now."

The merchant tapped a bell and a clerk entered from the counting-room.

"Hunt Young up and tell him to come here," said Mr. Appleby.

In a short time the porter made his appearance.

"Young, this is Vance Vinton, your new assistant. He will report at seven in the morning when you open up. Put him to work, and show him the ropes."

"Very well, Mr. Appleby," replied the man respectfully, scanning Vance critically and forming a favorable opinion of him.

"That is all, Young."

The merchant then told Vance what his wages would be to start with and dismissed him. Then the boy returned uptown to seek a furnished room for himself.

CHAPTER V.—In Which Our Hero Is Rewarded by the Railroad Company.

Vance was at the store promptly at seven next morning, and the porter set him to work sweeping out the office and the store. The clerks and

salesmen began to arrive just before eight, and then Vance was sent down to the post-office to get the bulk of the mail, which he got out of a box. After turning the mail over to the head bookkeeper and cashier he went up to the top floor to help the porter stow away a consignment of furniture that had arrived that morning. He was kept busy until noon, when he was allowed half an hour to go out and get his lunch at a cheap lunch house in the vicinity. Then he had all he could do until the whistle announced six o'clock, which was the hour the store closed.

Vance received a full week's salary on Saturday afternoon, though he had only worked for four days, but he had acquitted himself well, and Young had made a favorable report to Mr. Appleby. Vance spent Sunday in getting acquainted with the upper part of New York. He wrote a lengthy letter to Gertie Garnett, detailing all that had happened to him since he parted company with her and her father in front of the bank. The Garnetts had seen the fact reported in a New York paper about how a boy named Vance Vinton had saved the early west-bound express from wreck at the mouth of the tunnel, and they were very much surprised by the news. Gertie left the room wondering when she would hear from Vance, in whom she felt a very strong interest. She was so anxious to get a letter from her new acquaintance that she walked to the post-office Monday afternoon and inquired for the family mail.

"I was just about to send it over to the bank, as usual, Miss Garnett," said the postmaster politely. "Will you take it with you?"

"Certainly," she replied.

So he handed her several letters, a magazine and a newspaper. She looked the letters over and found one for herself addressed in a handwriting strange to her, and postmarked New York. She quickly tore the envelope open and saw that she had made no mistake as to the sender. While she was standing in the general store reading it Arthur Hoover walked in. He came after mail, too. He saw Gertie and stepped up to her. She had treated him with marked coolness since the dog episode, much to his dissatisfaction. In order to make up with the young lady again he hauled in his horns.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Gertie," he said, raising his hat politely.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Hoover," replied Gertie coldly.

"I see you have come for your mail, like myself," he went on.

She made no reply, but continued reading Vance's letter. He tapped his polished shoes with his natty cane and felt kind of uncomfortable.

"May I have the pleasure of walking home with you, Miss Gertie?"

"I am not going home at present," she answered shortly.

"Oh, I'm in no hurry. I have lots of time."

"I intend to make a visit before I go home," she said, hoping to shake him off.

"I can go with you part of the way, then, can't I?"

"It isn't worth while."

"Will you go riding with me tomorrow afternoon?" he asked after a pause.

"I have an engagement for tomorrow afternoon."

"Then the day after?"

"I don't care to make any arrangements so far ahead."

"That isn't far ahead," he persisted.

"You will have to excuse me now," she said, folding the letter up half read and putting it in her pocket. "Good-afternoon," and she swept out of the store with the air of a little queen.

On Monday morning an oblong letter, bearing the imprint of the N. Y. C. & H. R. Railroad Company, and addressed to Vance Vinton, care of Wilford Appleby, was delivered at the store by the mail-carrier. The letter was handed to the merchant and he sent for Vance.

"Here's a letter for you, Vance," he said, wondering what communication the railroad company could have to make to his office boy.

"Thank you, sir," replied Vance, taking it and retiring.

When he returned upstairs again he opened it, and found it was a typewritten note signed by the president of the company requesting him to call at his office in the Grand Central Depot as soon as he could find it convenient to do so. When he came in from lunch he went into the private office and showed the note to Mr. Appleby.

"Are you looking for a situation with the railroad company?" asked the merchant in some surprise, and not much pleased at the thought.

"No, sir."

"Then why does the president wish you to call at his office?"

"I suppose he wishes to see me because I saved the express."

"Saved the express!" exclaimed the merchant, rather puzzled. "What do you mean?"

Then Vance told him what occurred at the mouth of the tunnel on the morning he left Berkeley for the city. This was the first that Mr. Appleby had heard about the matter, and he was not a little surprised.

"Upon my word, you are a remarkable boy," he said in a tone of some admiration. "First you save my cousin's daughter from a vicious dog, then you save an express train from being wrecked by a gang of miscreants. Well, I suppose you'll have to call on the president. Probably you'll receive a reward from the company. At any rate, you deserve something for what you did. You surely saved many lives and the company from numerous damage suits. You'd better go right uptown now."

Vance told the head porter that he was obliged to be away an hour or two and then he left the store. On arriving at the Grand Central Station Vance inquired his way to the office of the president. When he entered the waiting-room he was headed off by a dudish-looking youth who inquired his business. Vance said he had received a letter from the president of the company asking him to call.

"What's your name?" asked the boy.

Vance gave it, and the youth told him to take a seat. He went into an adjoining room, and when he came back he motioned to Vance to follow him. Then Vinton was ushered into the presence of the president of the road. The great mogul received the boy very graciously, shook hands with him and complimented him on his grit in

getting the better of the train-wreckers. Then he asked Vance to go over the incident as it actually happened, and the boy did so. The president complimented him again and handed him the company's check for \$1,000 as an evidence of the corporation's appreciation of his services. He added that if Vance ever wanted a favor in the future he must not hesitate to write or call upon him, and if it was possible for him to grant it he would do so.

Then he shook hands with Vance once more and dismissed him. Vance felt several inches taller and several degrees more important when he left the building than when he entered it. The thousand-dollar check in his pocket made him feel like a man. It seemed an enormous sum of money to him at that moment, for he had never had ore than the \$50 that Bunker Garnett loaned him in his pocket in all his life. That night after supper he wrote another letter to Gertie, told her about his interview with the president of the railroad company, and about the check, which he said he was going to put into the bank as a nest-egg for the future.

CHAPTER VI.—In Which Our Hero Proceeds to Learn the Business on the Quiet.

Thus six months passed away and Vance continued to perform the duties connected with his lowly position with just as much faithfulness as though the fate of the establishment depended on his fidelity in that respect. The head porter was satisfied that Vance was one boy in a thousand, and he felt sure that he would make his mark. As the boy got acquainted with the business he began to take a lively interest in it. He determined to work his way up to the position of salesman. With that object in view he believed that he couldn't know too much about the manufacture of furniture and the material with which it was upholstered.

He began his search after knowledge by asking questions of Young whenever the opportunity offered. He found, however, that though the head porter had been for many years with the establishment, he possessed no great fund of knowledge on the subject. What he knew about the general make up of furniture was what he couldn't help picking up during a long experience in handling it. One evening Vance stopped in front of a second-hand book-store on Third Avenue and began looking over the well-worn volumes that lined an outside stand. He was quite a reader and thought he might pick up something that would interest a spare hour. Among the books he handled was one that treated about furniture. It struck him that this would be useful to him, so he asked the store-keeper how much he wanted for it. The man said a quarter and Vance purchased it. When the boy got back to his room he spent the rest of the evening reading the book. It proved to be quite a valuable text-book on the manufacture and upholstering of furniture, and it greatly interested Vance.

He gained more theoretical information out of it about the business he was in than he would have picked up in years in his present position. What he learned created a strong desire for more information of the same kind, and when he fin-

ished the book he went back to the store and asked the dealer if he had any more books on furniture. The man had another one, though it was not so good as the other. Vance also found a volume treating on upholstery as applied to furniture. He bought both books, took them home, and studied them diligently. About this time a young man whose acquaintance he had made took him to the Mechanics' Library. This was a free library, but to secure the privilege of taking out books one had to be guaranteed by a member of the society.

When Vance said he'd like to take out books his friend said he'd fix it so he could do so. He got his own guarantor to endorse Vinton and so Vance became a member of the library for a year. He found several books on furniture here, books that were up to date and too expensive for him to have bought. Some of the books treated on medieval furniture, that is, furniture of the middle ages, and so on down to modern times. Whenever he had the chance he examined the various kinds of furniture in the store on the second, or sample, floor, and studied their make-up and upholstering critically. Every time a new design of furniture arrived he wouldn't rest till it had received his earnest attention. No one but Young noticed what Vance was about, and he paid very little attention, figuring that the boy was following out instructions from the merchant to make himself acquainted with all the details of the business. Thus another six months passed into the dim and misty past, but during it Vance had acquired an invaluable store of knowledge that only the most painstaking effort could have secured.

The boy had made himself so solid with Mr. Appleby that the merchant was thinking about advancing him to a desk in the counting-room. Had Vance been consulted on the subject he would have intimated that he preferred a chance to show what he could do in the salesroom. One day when the merchant happened to be short-handed in the salesroom quite a number of customers called to be waited on. Mr. Appleby himself had to go up in the salesroom and take a hand to help matters out. During the morning Vance was called down on the floor to shift some of the furniture and make room for some fresh consignments that had arrived a few days before from one of the manufacturers with whom Appleby traded. Business had been so brisk for several days past that none of the salesmen had had an opportunity to get acquainted with the merits of the new stuff, and consequently it was not yet on sale, though tags had been attached with the wholesale price in the office numbers, which were, of course, not intelligible to outsiders. Vance, through Young, had made himself acquainted with the meaning of the secret code governing prices, and he could tell at a glance just what the furniture cost Mr. Appleby and what the merchant was asking for it.

As we have just remarked, on the day that Mr. Appleby was short-handed in salesmen and he had to turn to himself, Vance was called to the sales floor to make himself useful, and proceeded to do so in a quiet, unobtrusive manner. It was now that the chance of his life turned up in the person of a little old gentleman named George Winter, one of the most important customers of the house. Winter had dealt with Appleby for twenty years, and the two men were like chums. The merchant

always waited on him personally, whether he had idle salesmen or not. On this occasion when Winter walked into the salesroom, with the sang froid of a partner in the house, Appleby was engaged with a new customer that he was trying hard to secure. He could not very well leave him, so, after giving Winter a cordial greeting, he told him to take a seat for a little while, or look around himself until he was ready to take him in hand. Winter didn't care to sit down, but preferred to look around among the samples, so he moved slowly about the big floor, smoking a fat cigar and making mental notes of what he thought he wanted.

CHAPTER VII.—In Which Our Hero is Promoted to Be a Salesman

By degrees Winter came to where Vance was moving the new samples into place. The old man's sharp eyes were particularly attracted to one of the sets that the boy had just displayed to the best advantage. He proceeded to examine the furniture.

"This is something quite new, isn't it?" he said to Vinton.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy politely. "It is an uncommon fine thing. Something we don't often get into the place. You will observe that the carving on this set is a combination of the Charles XII and Louis XIII styles."

Winter, though a connoisseur, hadn't noticed the fact, and he looked at the boy in some surprise.

"You seem to understand the design of furniture pretty well, young man," he said.

"I don't pretend to have a great knowledge of it, sir, as yet, as I am young, but I have devoted a great deal of study to the subject of both furniture and upholstery. For instance, I saw when this set arrived here that it was upholstered in a special kind of silk tapestry made only in Lingerie, France."

"How could you judge that?" asked Winter, regarding the boy with interest.

"I recognize it by the design. That design cannot be duplicated anywhere, that is, exactly enough to deceive an expert."

"Then you consider yourself an expert on the subject," replied the old gentleman with just the suspicion of a smile.

"Well, sir," answered Vance, somewhat embarrassed, "I won't say that, but I do know a whole lot about the various kinds of goods used to upholster furniture. Now that set over yonder is upholstered in a kind of brocatelle that is usually used to line the interior of swell carriages. It is manufactured by a certain Springfield house, and they have a patent on all the designs they put out. I can tell that brocatelle anywhere, as I presume you can yourself. You see, here is another set fixed up with an imitation brand of the Springfield output. It looks just like it, doesn't it? in many ways, yet there is a whole lot of difference in the make, texture and quality. This set we sell for \$874 net, while the other costs the dealer \$992 net. Yet I have heard that some furniture men have palmed off the imitation for the real, because it requires an educated eye to tell the real difference between them."

Winter listened to Vance with much interest. The boy was quite a revelation to him. He had seen him several times about the house, but had never seen him attempt to sell a single article. Apparently this lad was well able to act as a salesman. At any rate, Winter liked to be talked to in the way Vance was doing. The boy, under the enthusiasm of the moment, forgot that he was overstepping his line of duty, and he kept on showing different sets and pieces of furniture to the best customer of the establishment. Winter, seeing that Mr. Appleby was still very much engaged with his new caller, and finding that Vance appeared to understand how to talk furniture from a very entertaining standpoint, decided not to wait for the merchant to be disengaged, but to let the boy take his order.

"By the way, what is your name, young man?" he asked.

"Vance Vinton."

"How long have you been with Mr. Appleby?"
"A little over a year."

"Well, go and get a pad. I want you to sell me a bill of goods."

"I am not a salesman. Mr. Appleby might object."

"Nonsense! Get the pad. I know a salesman when I meet with one, and I'll warrant you're as good as any in Mr. Appleby's employ."

Thus encouraged, Vance got a pad and returned to the old gentleman.

"Put my name down at the top—George Winter, Buffalo, New York."

Vance wrote the name and address down.

"Now, we'll begin with that combination Charles XII. and Louis XIII. set. What is the price?"

Vance told him.

Winter offered him \$100 less, but the boy said laughingly:

"You're an old customer, Mr. Winter, and you know we have only one price here, and that as low as anybody in the trade, considering the quality of the goods."

The old gentleman told him to put down the set, and then they went on to another. Vance had the pad pretty well filled up by the time Mr. Appleby was at liberty.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting so long, Winter, but that was a new man I wanted to hold, and I succeeded in selling him quite a bill. Now, I'll attend to you."

"You're too late, Appleby," chuckled the old gentleman. "I've bought about all I want from this young man."

"Bought all you want from him!" almost gasped the merchant. "Why, he isn't one of my salesmen."

"So he told me; but if I were you I'd make him one without delay."

"Make him one! He's only my office boy and general helper. It will be some time yet before he learns the business sufficiently to qualify for a salesman."

"Think so, eh? I was not aware that you were so blind to the merits of one of your employees. If I had this boy in my store I'd make him my head salesman."

"You'd do what, Winter?" ejaculated the astonished merchant.

"I'd make him head salesman. He's got all the qualities of one in him, and only needs a

little practice to make a corker, you can take my word for that."

Mr. Appleby looked at Vance and then back at Winter, hardly knowing what to think. Vance, blushing and much embarrassed, handed his employer the pad with the order he had taken from Winter and, excusing himself, walked away to finish what he had been engaged about previous to Winter's coming. He could see the merchant and the old gentleman talking quite animatedly together, and he guessed he was the subject under discussion. After Winter had gone away Mr. Appleby came back and hunted Vance up.

"Say, young man, where did you learn so much about furniture? Mr. Winter says what you don't seem to know about the goods on this floor isn't worth mentioning. The very first thing you sold him was this new set that came in yesterday. He says you called it a combination Charles XII. and Louis XIII. Tell me how you make that out. What do you know about the set, anyway? I haven't looked into it myself, and consequently it isn't on sale."

"Then I shouldn't have sold it, I suppose. I thought—"

"I'm not finding any fault with you for having put it on Winter, for if you've made any misrepresentation I can easily square matters with him. What I want to understand is how and where you got all your information. Winter tells me you've got style, quality and everything about the goods down finer than silk. Now you certainly must know a good bit, for Winter is an expert in furniture himself. He told me that you told him things he never dreamed about. He further says that you have the history of furniture at your fingers' ends, and that you are the most entertaining talker he ever met. In fact, he claims that he bought more from you than he intended when he came to the city. He couldn't resist your eloquence. That's considerable of an admission, for I never knew Winter to buy a single piece before that he hadn't more or less decided on before he struck the store. What did you tell him about this combination set, as you call it?"

Vance at once told Mr. Appleby all he had said to Winter about the set.

"How in thunder did you acquire your knowledge about it?" asked the puzzled merchant; "that is, assuming that you are correct. That set hasn't been over twenty-four hours in this establishment."

Vance then explained to Mr. Appleby how he had made up his mind to learn the business from A to Z, with the idea of eventually becoming a competent salesman. He told him how he had been reading up on the subject for the past six months, and then trying his best to reduce his knowledge to practical demonstration. After he had finished, the merchant asked Vance all sorts of questions about the quality and make of a dozen different kinds of furniture, and received answers that surprised him.

"Well, it seems to me that Winter was right when he told me that you were wasting your talents in your present position. I can't afford to have you continue any longer as a general helper. I shall make you a salesman forthwith, and raise your wages to a point commensurate with your abilities. I might have suspected that you would turn out something above the ordinary.

A boy with your grit and perseverance cannot be kept down. He will reach the top in spite of every obstacle. Come downstairs and I will fix this promotion of yours up. By George! Garnett sent me a gem when he directed you to my consideration!"

Vance followed the merchant to his office, and thus in an hour the boy jumped from the lowly position of general helper about the store to that of a salesman.

CHAPTER VIII.—In Which Our Hero Makes a Strange Discovery.

When the information leaked through the house that Vance had been promoted to the position of salesman it was received with astonishment and not a little incredulity. He was immediately buttonholed by one of the regular salesmen.

"Say, Winton, what rot is this I hear about you having been made a salesman?" he asked rather aggressively, for neither he nor the other salesmen relished the idea of the boy being advanced on a par with themselves.

"Not rot at all, Mr. Cooke. It happens to be a fact," replied Vance coolly.

"Oh, it is a fact, is it?" sneered Cooke. "Has Appleby suddenly gone dippy?"

"You'd better ask him, Mr. Cooke."

"Don't get cheeky, young fellow," replied the salesman angrily. "If you start in to put on any airs with me, or the rest of us on the sales floor, we'll take you down so quick it will make your head swim."

"I don't intend to put on any airs. I intend to stick strictly to business."

"What do you know about selling goods, I'd like to know?"

"If I asked you such a question you'd consider me impertinent," replied Vance.

"I certainly would. Do you mean to say you consider me impertinent for putting the question to you?"

"I think you are treading on delicate ground."

"Oh, you do?" snarled Cooke. "Do you know that you're nothing but a boy?"

"I am fully aware of that fact. What of it?"

"Well, Benson, myself, and the others don't want kids shoving their oars into our department."

"Do you refer to me?"

"I do."

"Then you had better see Mr. Appleby about it. I shall enter my duties as a salesman here next Monday according to my present instructions."

"Then you won't remain long in the store, I can tell you," replied Cooke darkly.

"Why not?" demanded Vance sharply.

"You'll find out why not in good time."

"You seem to entertain a grouch against my becoming a salesman."

"We don't want boys, especially a boy who sweeps out the store every day, to stand on a par with us. We are gentlemen."

"Didn't you ever sweep a store out when you were a boy?"

"It's none of your business what I did when I was a boy. I'm not a boy now. I have been a salesman ten years, and I was ten years reaching that point. Here you've only been in this

store a year, and the boss makes you a salesman. Why, it's enough to make a jackass laugh."

"I don't see that you are laughing much over it."

"What's that? Do you compare me with a jackass?" roared Cooke.

"I said nothing about your resemblance to such an animal."

"You meant it, you young whippersnapper!" snorted the irate salesman, shaking his fist in the boy's face.

"I meant no such thing, Mr. Cooke," replied Vance indignantly. "If you're going to address me in that way we'd better discontinue this interview."

Whereupon Vance walked away, leaving Cooke bubbling over with wrath. The salesmen were not the only ones disgruntled by the news of Vance's promotion. The junior bookkeepers, bill clerk, entry clerk, and other subordinates, who felt that the office boy had been advanced over their heads to a position much superior to that which they held themselves, were up in arms and jealous as a bunch of women outshone by some new favorite of fortune. Where Vance had heretofore received friendly greetings he now encountered stony looks, and overheard muttered sentences of dissatisfaction. In one day he became the most unpopular person in the house.

"It's too bad," he muttered when he realized the storm his advancement had raised about his ears; "but I can't help it. I shall stick it out just the same. I shall sell goods in this establishment as long as Mr. Appleby says so, no matter how the rest of the employees feel about it. They're jealous, that's the matter with the whole lot of them. They're jealous of my success."

And with those words he expressed the exact truth. Vance told Young about his promotion, and the head porter congratulated him. He, at any rate, wasn't jealous. Then the boy mentioned the change of bearing of all the salesmen and junior clerks toward him.

"Don't you mind them, Vinton. You're working for the boss, not for them. You follow instructions from headquarters and let them bag their heads," said Young.

"The salesmen will try and make trouble for me so as to get me bounced if they can; but they'd better not let me catch them at any underhand tricks, for if I do I'll make them sweat for it," said Vance resolutely.

"That's right. I wouldn't take any nonsense from any of them."

"I don't mean to."

A new office boy appeared at the store on Monday morning, and Vance didn't come down until eight o'clock. The other salesmen came straggling in soon after, and gathering in a bunch at the rear of the second floor they held an indignation meeting. While they were thus employed an early customer made his appearance, and Vance, being wide awake, took him in tow before any of the others came forward, and he was soon selling the man a bill of goods that amounted to several thousand dollars. He captured several customers during the day and his aggregate sales amounted to more than that of any of the other salesmen. This fact was conveyed to them by one of their friends in the office, and it further embittered them against Vance.

On Sunday night Vance called on Young, who lived in a cheap tenement on the lower West Side. It was the fifteenth anniversary of Young's wedding, and he gave a party, to which he invited his special friends. Vance brought an appropriate present and received a cordial welcome. The party didn't break up till one o'clock in the morning, and then the young salesman started across town to reach the nearest station on the Third Avenue elevated road.

It happened that his way took him past the store. He was greatly surprised to see the outer door slightly ajar. The circumstances struck him not only as odd, but decidedly out of order. He knew Young always locked things up tight at night when he left.

"I'm afraid there is something wrong," he muttered, staring at the crack in the doorway. "Looks as if somebody has broken in here," he added, noticing the mark of a jimmy on the woodwork. "It is clearly my duty to investigate."

He pushed the door in and found himself in the dark facing a glass door a yard from the outer one.

The inner door was shut and should have been locked, but when Vance turned the handle it opened easily enough. The boy was satisfied that thieves had either visited the store that night, or were in there at that moment.

The office was at the back of the ground floor, the rest of the space being filled up with desks, bookcases, and a general line of furniture. A single passage about six feet wide, led to the office. The store backed on a narrow street, chiefly used by the business houses of that neighborhood for receiving and shipping freight.

During business hours the narrow thoroughfare was more or less chocked up with trucks, loading or unloading. A gas jet was kept burning all night in the office of Mr. Appleby's store, and there was a round peep-hole in the shutters for the patrolman on duty to glance through when he passed that way to see that all was right inside. As Vance tiptoed down the aisle he saw the light burning on the other side of the glass partition. As far as he could make out he did not see any intruders. He kept on, however, to find out, if possible, if thieves had been there. Reaching the glass door of the office he looked inside. It was empty, and nothing appeared to be out of order. To make sure he opened the door and stepped inside. Then he caught the gleam of light through the crack in the private office door which stood ajar. Vance also heard the sound of voices in the little room.

"The thieves are in there," he breathed. "What shall I do to put a spoke in their wheel?"

Slipping off his shoes he crept over to the door, pushed it cautiously open far enough to admit his head and looked in. There were two men squatting before Mr. Appleby's private safe, one of whom was working at the combination lock, occasionally consulting a slip of paper in his hand.

The light from an electric lamp held by one of the intruders shone full on the same door, but the reflection lit up the faces of the men sufficiently for Vance to recognize them. The man fumbling at the lock was Mr. Appleby's trusted cashier, while the other was Cooke, the salesman.

CHAPTER IX.—In Which Our Hero Saves the Boss's Money.

Vance was very much astonished to see Cooke and the cashier in the store at that hour of the night, and especially monkeying with Mr. Appleby's private safe. They had no right at all to be there, and therefore their presence and their actions were decidedly suspicious.

"They're up to something crooked," thought the boy. "It is a good thing I came this way and noticed that the front door had been forced. I reckon these men will have an explanation to make to-morrow to Mr. Appleby, and it's more than likely they'll get the bounce, if nothing worse happens to them. The cashier seems to have the figures of the combination in his hand. He must have found them somewhere."

"Can't you get it open?" asked Cooke.

"Sure, I can. It's open now," replied the cashier, seizing the handle and pulling open the heavy door.

Cooke flashed the light inside the safe.

"The money is in one of these drawers," said the cashier.

"They're locked, aren't they?"

"I'll be able to force them with this thin steel jimmy."

The speaker immediately began operations, and presently Vance heard a snapping sound, like a pistol shot. The cashier had broken the tongue of the lock of the upper drawer.

"Here's the money," he said exultantly, "six thousand dollars—three thousand apiece. We'll divide when we reach your room."

He swung the safe door shut and both stood up.

"The old man will wonder how the drawer got broken and the money disappeared with the safe lock apparently not tampered with," chuckled Cooke.

"Let him wonder. What do we care? Neither he nor anybody else can suspect us," said the cashier. "Now let's be off."

Vance slipped away from the door just in time to avoid being seen. Unfortunately, one of his feet came in contact with an office stool and it fell over with a crash just as the cashier, followed by Cooke, stepped into the counting-room.

"Good Lord! What was that?" gasped the salesman.

The cashier, who was equally startled, made no answer. They both stood glued to the spot, while Vance, who had ducked under one of the tall desks, remained as silent as a mouse.

"It's a stool that fell down," said the cashier, after they had listened attentively for several minutes.

"I see it is," replied Cooke, in an agitated tone; "but how came it to fall?"

"Must have been one of the big cats."

"How could a cat throw down that big stool? I'm afraid there is somebody here."

"Throw your electric light around and see if there is," said the cashier; "but I don't believe there is anybody in the building. How could there be? There is nobody around this neighborhood at this hour, except the cop, and he won't be back for an hour probably. We were careful to close the front door."

"But we didn't lock it, nor the glass door, either," said Cooke.

"Because we couldn't, as the porter has the keys."

"Somebody might have tried the front door, and finding it unlocked walked in."

"Not one chance in a hundred."

"That one chance might—"

"Don't talk so much. I'll turn up the gas. That will be better than your electric light. Shut the door of the private office."

Vance knew that when the gas was turned on full he would be discovered, so he dashed out from under the desk and butted the cashier in the stomach, upsetting him on the floor. The man uttered a cry as he went down. Cooke also uttered an exclamation, for he saw the dark object pop out and bump into his companion. Vance then took advantage of the confusion into which he had thrown the two unfaithful employees and darted for the glass door opening into the store, picking up his shoes on the way. He slammed the door to after him, slipped on his shoes and awaited further developments. He chuckled as he thought of the consternation into which he had thrown the two men, and he wondered how he could finish the job in a way that would redound to his credit. The cashier had stolen \$6,000 from Mr. Appleby's private safe, which he expected to divide with Cooke. Vance clearly regarded it as his duty to recover that money and return it to the merchant when he came down to his office. He thought first of rushing to the front entrance and looking for a policeman, but on reflection he knew the chances were against one being in sight. If he left the building to find one the cashier and Cooke would escape while he was away, and Vance would then have only his uncorroborated statement to bring against the rascals, which they would naturally brand as an absurd lie.

In order to bring the crime home to them the money would have to be found on either one or the other.

Vance could see the two men consulting inside the office. They were seemingly afraid to come out into the store. At the same time they did not dare remain long in the counting-room. The boy knew that it would be foolish in him to attack the men single-handed without a weapon of some kind, and even at that he would be taking chances. Just the same he was resolved that they should not get away. At length the cashier and his companion started to leave the counting-room. Vance shoved the cane settee he had been sitting on across the dark passage. Then he grabbed up a small, flat unholstered stool that his foot came in contact with in the dark and waited. The two evidently had decided to make a quick break for the front door, without paying any attention to the person they knew was in the store.

As they hurried forward the cashier collided with the settee, and both went over in a heap on the floor, Cooke tumbling on top.

"Oh, oh," groaned the cashier, "I've broken my shins, and you nearly knocked the wind out of me."

"I nearly broke my neck," howled Cooke. "That villain, whoever he is, put this blamed obstruction right in our path."

"Help me up, will you?" asked the cashier.

"Sure, I'll—"

Swat! The stool caught him in the middle of the back, and he pitched forward on his face with a roar of pain that echoed through the store.

"What's happened to you?" inquired the cashier, struggling to get up.

Cooke lay groaning on the ground, for the blow had been no gentle one. Vance sneaked up behind and struck him a blow behind the ear and he went down like a ninepin.

The boy grabbed the dazed man in his arms and dragged him into the office where he tied his arms behind him with a towel.

Then he shoved him into the private room, turned the key on him and put it in his pocket.

"That's one of them disposed of," breathed Vance. "Now for Cooke."

Making his way to the front door he looked out, but there was no sign of the salesman outside.

"I guess he's gone. I'll have to stay here and watch the store till a policeman shows up. It would never do for me to go away and leave the place open in this way, even if I have to stay here on guard all night," Vance said to himself.

He stood there for nearly an hour before he heard the sound of footsteps echoing along the sidewalk. A patrolman was leisurely approaching, carelessly swinging his night-stick. As soon as he got near Vance hailed him.

When the officer came up to him the boy explained who he was, told where he had been spending the evening, and how on his way home he passed by the store and found the outside door ajar.

"It was all right when I passed here two hours ago," said the cop. "Somebody has been here since."

Vance proceeded with his story, and told the policeman all that the reader knows.

The officer was much astonished.

"You say that you caught one of them?" he said.

"Yes. I locked him up in the boss' private office.

"I suppose you're prepared to make the charge of burglary against him, so I'll take him to the station."

"I am," replied the boy.

"Then I'll go in and get him," said the officer.

They both entered the store. When they came to the spot where the settee lay in their path, Vance restored it to its proper place and put the stool back where he had found it.

Then they went on to the counting-room. When Vance opened the private room door they found the cashier sitting in Mr. Appleby's chair.

"You are under arrest, my man," said the officer.

The cashier made no answer. The unexpected ending of his enterprise seemed to have knocked the wind completely out of his sails, so to speak. He offered no resistance when the policeman marched him through the store to the street.

"Find a couple of small boards and a hammer and nails," said the officer. "We must secure this door before we leave."

Vance knew that he would find what was needed in the basement, so he went there and looked them up. Five minutes later he was nailing the door up under the cop's eye.

"You know the chap who got away, I think you said?"

"Sure, I do. He's one of our salesmen."

"Know where he lives?"

"I do not, but we've got his address at the store."

The cashier was marched to the station and lined up at the desk. Vance told his story to the desk man, and charged the cashier with robbing Mr. Appleby's private safe of \$6,000.

The prisoner was searched and the money found on him. After his pedigree had been taken he was locked up in a cell and then Vance went home well satisfied with his night's work.

CHAPTER X.—In Which Our Hero Sees Gertie Garnett Again.

When Young appeared at the store a few minutes before seven next morning he was astonished to find the street door nailed up. He removed the boards and let himself in, discovering to his further surprise that the inside door was unlocked. On examining the doors he saw that both had been forced with a jimmy, and he concluded at once that the place had been entered by crooks and robbed. He started for the counting-room first thing, expecting to find a scene of confusion there, but nothing had seemingly been disturbed.

"The patrolman on this beat must have nailed the outside door up, which is a sign that he found it open. Probably he scared the burglars away as they were all ready to walk in. At any rate, there is no indication that any robbery has occurred."

Thus figured Young, and then he went about his business. Instead of coming downtown at eight o'clock that morning, Vance walked up to Mr. Appleby's home on Lexington Avenue. The merchant was just coming downstairs in answer to the breakfast bell when Vance rang the door-bell and asked for him.

"Why, Vance!" he exclaimed in surprise when the boy was admitted to the hall.

"I have no doubt that you are surprised to see me, at your house, especially at so early an hour, when I should be at the store, but I have called on a matter of great importance."

"Indeed!" replied the merchant, looking at him curiously.

"Yes, sir. Your store was broken into last night by two men, and \$6,000 taken by one of them from your private safe."

"Were the thieves captured?" asked the merchant eagerly.

"One of them was, and the money recovered."

"Good!" replied Mr. Appleby, much relieved.

"It was I who found the store door open at half-past one this morning," said Vance.

"You!" ejaculated the merchant in surprise. "What were you doing down there at so early an hour?"

"I attended Young's wedding anniversary last night, at his flat, on the lower West Side, and on my way to the nearest Third Avenue station I passed the store."

Vance proceeded to tell everything that had happened after he entered the store. When the boy disclosed the identity of the thieves to him

Mr. Appleby received his statement with some incredulity.

"Do you mean to say that one of these thieves was Mr. Smith, my cashier, and the other Cooke, one of my salesmen?" he said.

"I do. Mr. Smith unlocked the safe and took the money out of one of the drawers, the lock of which he broke to get at it. Cooke was to get half of the \$6,000."

Vance then went on with his story, telling how he captured Smith, and later on turned him over to a policeman.

"He is now locked up at the Church Street station, and will be removed to the Tombs Police Court for examination this morning. I will have to go there to give my evidence against him. The police have your money."

"What about Cooke?"

"He got away while I was making a prisoner of Smith."

"Well, Vance, I am under great obligations to you for saving my money, and I promise you that I will make it all right with you."

"That's all right, Mr. Appleby. It was my duty to act as I did, and I am not entitled to any special thanks," replied the boy.

Great was the excitement among the employees of the store when the news of the arrest of cashier Smith spread among them. The particulars of the case did not reach their ears until it appeared in the early afternoon papers, when it was seen that Vance was the hero of the affair. As soon as the merchant came downtown he furnished the police with Cooke's address and requested his arrest. The salesman, however, had taken the precaution to cross over to Jersey City to remain until he found out whether it was safe for him to venture back. What he read in the newspapers convinced him that the police were looking for him, and so he skipped out for Philadelphia. For the present at least he was safe, as no one had any idea where he had gone.

Smith, the cashier, was duly examined before a city magistrate and on Vance's testimony was held for action of the Grand Jury. He was subsequently tried and convicted, and he got six years in the State prison. Mr. Appleby presented Vance with a handsome gold watch and chain and \$500 in cash as an evidence of his appreciation of his services. A few weeks went by and then Vance received a letter from Gertie telling him that she and her mother were coming to New York for a short visit, and that they were to stay at Mr. Appleby's home.

Vance was delighted at the news, for he was very anxious to see the little beauty of Berkeley village again. He judged that she must be greatly improved in every way, as it was something more than a year since he parted from her in front of her father's bank. He wondered to what extent he shared her thoughts.

"If she only thinks half as much of me as I do of her I'll be satisfied," he said to himself. "She's a fine girl, and I haven't seen a city girl yet that can hold a candle to her."

Vance waited with considerable impatience for Gertie's visit to New York. Finally Mr. Appleby called him into his private office one morning and told him that Miss Garnee and her mother had

arrived in the city the previous afternoon and they had expressed a wish to see him that evening if he could make it convenient to call. Of course Vance could make it convenient to call, and he told the merchant so. At eight o'clock he presented himself at Mr. Appleby's residence and was shown into the parlor. In a few minutes Gertie appeared, looking radiant in her fresh beauty, which was well set off by a new gown.

The young salesman spent a delightful evening with Gertie and before leaving made an engagement to take her to one of the Broadway theatres to see a popular play. The Garnetts remained in the city two weeks, during which time the young people saw a good deal of each other and enjoyed themselves hugely. Vance was invited to visit at the banker's home whenever he could find the opportunity.

"When your vacation time comes around you must spend it with us," said Gertie; "that is, if you wish to do so," she added with a sidelong glance that was simply irresistible.

Vance hastened to say that nothing would give him greater pleasure.

"But before that time you certainly can come up to Berkeley of a Sunday afternoon and stay over with us until Monday morning, won't you?" she said.

"I guess I can arrange it if you would like to have me do so," replied Vance.

"Of course I would like to have you do so."

"Then I will speak to Mr. Appleby about it."

"He won't put any obstacles in your way, for he thinks you're one of the smartest, if not the smartest, employees he has in the store. I heard him say so."

"I am very much obliged to Mr. Appleby for his good opinion."

"Oh, you deserve it. There aren't many boys like you."

"Perhaps it's a good thing that you don't live in the city," he said.

"Why?" she asked in surprise.

"Because I'm afraid you'd take my attention away from my business. I wouldn't be able to think of anything else but you."

"Oh!" she exclaimed with another deep blush. "You don't mean that, I know."

"Yes, I do. As it is, I'm thinking of you more than half my time. When I heard you were coming to visit Mr. Appleby with your mother I was on pins and needles until you came. Now that you are going back tomorrow I've got a touch of the blues. I shall miss you a good deal," he said soberly.

Gertie made no reply, but looked steadily at the run on which her shapely boots rested, as if she were studying the pattern attentively, which, however, was not the case. Finally Vance got up and said it was time for him to go. Miss Gertie accompanied him to the front door, and it took Vance ten minutes before he could reach the last word. She looked after him as he walked down the street, and wished that she was living in New York so that she could see him right along. Vance also wished she was going to stay longer, and he wished some other things connected with her, which only went to prove that he was very much in love with her.

CHAPTER XI.—In Which Our Hero Is Given A Chance To Show What Is In Him.

A week later a big city dealer who got all his furniture from Mr. Appleby called at the store and told the merchant that he expected to get an order for something entirely original in the furniture line. A very wealthy man, whose son was about to be married to the daughter of a trust magnate, was going to present the young couple with a fine new house, now in course of erection, completely furnished and decorated throughout on original lines. The gentleman wanted designs and prices submitted, though it was understood that expense was not to stand in the way of art and richness. Mr. Appleby said he would see what he could secure on the lines wanted, and asked for a reasonable time in which to consult with experts. After thinking the matter over the merchant thought of Vance's familiarity with furniture, ancient and modern, and sent for him.

"Here's a chance for you to spread yourself, young man," said Appleby, "if you think the problem isn't too hard for you to tackle."

He then told the young salesman what was wanted.

"If you think you can evolve something particularly unique in the furniture and upholstery line, without being hampered as to cost, go ahead and see what you can do. If your designs meet with a favorable reception you will make a name for yourself in the artistic furniture line that will pave the way to fortune."

"I'll try, sir. It is a matter I am sure to find of great interest. The furniture is to be designed for the whole house, I believe?"

"That's right."

"Then, sir, I shall want to find out just how the rooms are to be painted and decorated in order to turn out the proper color effect," replied Vance. "I should also like to have a personal interview with Mr. Ward, the gentleman who is going to give the order."

"I will give you a letter to Mr. Hughes, the dealer, introducing you as an authority on fine furniture, and you can tell him what your plans are."

"All right, sir."

Accordingly Mr. Appleby wrote the letter and handed it to the young salesman. Vance spent two evenings at the Mechanics' Library before he presented his letter to Mr. Hughes at his store uptown. His interview with the dealer was very satisfactory to him, and Hughes gave him a letter of introduction to the rich Mr. Ward. Next day Vance called on that gentleman. He had a long talk with Mr. Ward, and greatly interested that gentleman with his knowledge concerning high-class furniture of the different ages—ancient, medieval and modern, especially that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and his ideas of applying up-to-date ideas to the best productions of the past.

Mr. Ward gave Vance a letter to the head of a well-known Fifth avenue decorative firm who was to produce the decoration and painting of the new house.

"He will show you designs in color for each of the rooms which have been approved by me, and you will thus be able to find out how you will

stand in the matter of shade," said Mr. Ward.

"My idea is to decorate into the furniture of each room some hint of the decorative design of the room itself," said Vance. "I want to produce, if possible, something that has never before been shown in a house. If I can work my plan out successfully your son will have a house that will be a dream in its outfitting."

"That's what I am looking for," said Mr. Ward. "Spare no expense in this matter, young man, and do your very best. Your designs will be submitted to an expert in artistic house-furnishing, and they will stand or fall on his report."

It took Vance two weeks to study out the salon furniture, the most important set, which he proposed to submit as a test. If he failed in that there was no use of his going further. Vance made the rough drawings, but he was obliged to employ a skilled draughtsman to reproduce them in proper artistic shape. He filled in the color design himself, and when he had a sample of each article of furniture intended for the salon, or grand parlor, he called on the millionaire and submitted the drawings for his inspection. Although Vance had evolved what the draughtsman and Mr. Appleby both declared to be a magnificent idea in the furniture line, the boy felt decidedly nervous when he visited the magnate, notwithstanding that Mr. Ward had said that he was not going to pass final judgment on the designs himself. Mr. Ward, however, was so taken with the result of Vance's proposition that he declared it suited him to a T.

"Any idea of what the cost of this set will be?" he said.

"No, sir; but it will run above \$20,000 easily enough. All three fabrics used in the upholstering will have to be made specially to order in Europe under a guarantee that the designs are not to be duplicated for anyone else. You wanted something original and special. Well, here you have got it. Such things cost big money. It will take time, too, to turn them out."

"How long do you suppose it will take?" asked Mr. Ward.

"Call it six months, though I'm afraid it will take longer."

"All right. I doubt if the house will be ready for the decorator before that time, and he won't be able to do his work inside of three months, so you will have plenty of time."

Vance estimated that the lowest figure that Mr. Ward could calculate on for the furniture complete was \$100,000, as the wood was to be the finest obtainable and the carvings alone would be something exquisite.

In due time the designs were passed upon favorably, a general and provisional estimate submitted of the cost, and Mr. Hughes received the signed order to go ahead. He communicated with Mr. Appleby, and the merchant called Vance into his office.

"Young man," he said, "you have hit the chance of your life. If the ultimate results agree with the promise afforded by your designs your fortune is made. As a salesman you have already made your mark in my estimation. For a designer and originator of artistic furniture you seem to be best fitted. The unusual point is that you are starting at the top of the ladder in that direction instead of at the foot, as might naturally be expected. But you couldn't do that unless

you are gifted with real genius for the work. To reproduce your designs to your satisfaction it will, of course, be necessary for you to give your entire attention to supervising the manufacture from start to finish. You will therefore start at once. You are to assume the entire responsibility of this order. You may have to go to Europe and give your personal attention to the proper reproduction of your upholstery designs. After getting your estimates from the manufacturers in this country you may find it advisable to have a part of the work done in a foreign country and shipped here to be finally assembled or put together like the parts of a machine. It will be up to you to use your own judgment, for the ultimate credit or blame, as the case may be, will rest on your shoulders. I have no fear but you will come out all right, for you are a boy of grit, and ambitious to succeed in a great venture. By giving the world something new, artistic and superb in the furniture line—something that is bound to be illustrated in the magazines and newspapers—you will make a reputation for yourself that will lead to both fame and fortune. Upon my word, even at this stage of the matter, I feel proud to have been the means of starting you on the right road to success."

Vance was very much gratified to hear his employer talk in this encouraging strain, and he resolved then and there that he would not disappoint the expectations that Mr. Appleby had in his ultimate triumph.

CHAPTER XII.—In Which Our Hero Discovers A Wolf In Sheep's Clothing.

Vance lost no time in getting the work under way, for there was a whole lot of preparation to be done before he could get things started in earnest.

As soon as the designs had been accepted and Mr. Ward had authorized Mr. Hughes to go ahead with the work, Vance wrote a sort of triumphant letter to Gertie telling her that things had turned out just as she had prophesied.

"Mr. Appleby has put the whole job in my hands to superintend," he wrote, "so it's up to me to turn out the goods or take the consequences. Well, I'm not afraid of results if I can get my designs reproduced as the specifications call for. I was going to make preparations to go to Europe at once, but I have decided to postpone the trip, as I have reason to believe that the Springfield Furniture & Upholstery Manufacturing Company can turn out the work I want as good as the French artists, and in that case such foreign material as I must have I can import without crossing the ocean myself. My idea was also to visit the famous carving mills at Milan, Italy, and another at Turin, but by accident I discovered that an Italian family of expert wood and ivory carvers and turners, from Turin, has lately arrived in this country, and has been hired by the Springfield Company, so it strikes me that I'll be able to get all my work done here, which will save considerable expense."

Vance having figured that the Springfield Company had the facilities for turning out what he wanted, he packed his grip, and taking his de-

signs in a specially-made case started for Springfield, Illinois, to consult with the general manager of the company.

No one in Mr. Appleby's establishment was supposed to know the business that took Vance out West, but it happened that one of the junior clerks, who privately felt very jealous of Vance's success, overheard an interview between Vance and the merchant, and thereby learned a secret not intended for his ears. This clerk, whose name was Moss, was a second cousin of the rascally Cooke, Mr. Appleby's late salesman, who had been implicated in the safe robbery, but had escaped by skipping out of the State, going to Philadelphia, and changing his name.

Cooke kept up communication with Moss, whose fidelity he believed he could rely on, and he got all his personal belongings out of his rooms in West Thirty-fourth street and forwarded to him in Philadelphia through the connivance of Moss.

When Moss discovered that Vance was going West, and the nature of the business taking him there, he lost no time in communicating the facts to Cooke, telling him that there was a chance for him to get square with the boy who had queered the business of looting Mr. Appleby's private safe.

Cooke duly received Moss's letter under his assumed name, and after reading it over decided that he would buy a ticket as far as Pittsburg, and try to steal the case of designs from Vance before he reached the Smoky City.

The boy would be traveling in one of the sleepers, and, if possible, he would get a berth in the same car, and try his game on after Vance had turned in and was asleep. Of course he would have to disguise himself in order to prevent Vinton from recognizing him, so when he got aboard the train at the North Philadelphia station he was made up as a white-haired old man of sixty-five years. He walked slowly through the Pullman cars, at the end of the train, and located Vance in the last one. There happened to be a vacant berth in the car, and Cooke secured it from the conductor before the train pulled out for the West. This berth happened to be the upper one in the same section as that secured by Vance, and Cooke therefore was entitled to occupy the double seat facing the boy.

Vance was reading a current issue of a monthly magazine when Cooke took possession of the seat to which the Pullman car ticket entitled him.

The young salesman looked up and saw that his new traveling companion appeared to be an inoffensive-looking old gentleman with white hair.

He did not dream that the white hair and mustache were bogus; the florid complexion and wrinkles made up with the aid of theatrical face preparations, and the aged manners assumed.

Vance was young yet in the ways of the world, and not overburdened with suspicions of mankind in general. In this country, especially when brought into contact on trains or steamboats, it is an easy matter for two men to strike up a temporary acquaintanceship, and even become quite chummy before they part, in all probability, to meet again. Cooke took advantage of this privilege of travelers to introduce himself as soon as possible to the boy he intended robbing.

The first thing he did, however, was to look around for the flat black case that Moss had informed him contained the valuable designs.

He saw it on the seat beside Vance, between his body and the side of the car. He got but a bare glimpse of it, but that was enough to stamp its size, shape and color in his mind's eye. It answered fully to his cousin's description, so Cooke hadn't any doubt but that was the article he was there to appropriate. After leaving Philadelphia the porter started in to make up the seats into beds. Cooke, while he pretended to be reading an evening paper, was watching Vance in a furtive way.

"I guess we'll have to move, young man," he said as the porter came up.

The boy nodded and left his seat as Cooke did the same. He was careful to pick up the case containing his designs and take it with him. They walked back to the smoking compartment at the end of the car. Cooke produced a cigar-case.

"Do you smoke, young man?" he asked, presenting it to Vance.

"No, thank you, I don't indulge," replied the boy.

"Not even to the extent of a cigarette?" said the bogus old man.

"Not even cigarettes," answered Vinton, very politely.

"Then I may assume that you confine your drinking to soft stuff," chuckled the disguised old rascal.

"I rarely drink anything but water."

"Stick to that principle, young man, and you'll get on all right."

"I mean to. Strong drink doesn't do any one a bit of good. On the contrary, it does a whole lot of harm."

"I agree with you. Look not upon the wine when it is red."

"Or white, either," laughed Vance.

"That's right. I should be glad to know your name, young man."

"Vance Vinton."

"Mine is Gregory Gallup. I'm a furniture dealer from Springfield, Illinois."

"Indeed!" replied Vance, with some interest. "Furniture is my line, too."

"You don't say! Have you a store of your own?"

"No, sir. I am connected with the wholesale house of Wilford Appleby, No. — Blank Street, New York."

"I've heard of the establishment. It's an old house in the line."

"Yes, sir. Mr. Appleby has been in business about thirty years."

"Are you traveling for the house?"

"Not in the sense you mean. I am going West to look after the production of a large order that Mr. Appleby has on his books."

They continued to converse for a time and then Vance excused himself, saying that he guessed he would turn in. Cooke betook himself to the rear platform, where there were stools for the accommodation of the passengers, and finished his cigar, turning over in his mind the best available plan for securing the case. He had a bottle of chloroform in his pocket which he intended to use for stupefying Vance if he couldn't get at the case in any other way. He remained up until eleven, by which time everybody in the car, except the porter, was in his bunk. Then he went to the section, the upper berth of which was his. A thick and heavy curtain veiled the bunks.

Observing that the porter was not visible he got behind the curtain and looked into the lower berth where Vance lay asleep. He saw no sign of the flat black case and concluded that the boy had stowed it under his pillow for greater safety.

He did not dare fumble for it lest he wake the boy.

"I'll have to drug him," he muttered, putting his hand in his pocket for the chloroform. He thrust his head out through the folds of the curtain and saw that the coast was clear. Then he took his handkerchief from his pocket and began saturating it with the drug. At that moment something awakened Vance and he saw the old white-haired man pouring something from a little bottle on a handkerchief. He naturally supposed the presumed old gentleman was going through the performance for his own benefit. Cooke recorked the bottle and returned it to his pocket, then, not noticing that his intended victim was awake and looking at him, he thrust his hand forward and pressed the handkerchief over the boy's mouth and nostrils.

CHAPPTER XIII.—He Is a Boy Of Grit.

In an instant Vance was alive to the real significance of the situation. Vance dashed the hand and handkerchief from his face and sat up in his berth, though not before he caught a good whiff of the drug, which made him feel confused and dizzy. Cooke, seeing that he had been detected in the act, became desperate, for he felt that exposure and arrest were likely to follow.

He figured that his sole chance of safety lay in carrying out his project at all hazards. With an imprecation he threw himself upon the boy and tried to accomplish his purpose. Vance was a sturdy youth, and though Cooke had the advantage of position, the boy put up such a struggle that the disguised furniture salesman was unable to make any headway. The noise they made attracted the attention of the colored porter, who at that moment came into that part of the car to collect shoes, which it was his practice to polish for the customary tips he secured thereby from the passengers.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, coming to the section. "What's the trouble here?"

"Catch hold of this old man," replied Vance. "He's been trying to drug me."

Before the astonished porter could do anything Cooke sprang up, pushed him aside and rushed forward into the next car. Vance jumped out of his berth, and while he hurried on his trousers and jacket, which he had removed when he turned in, explained matters to the porter.

"Where is the conductor?" he inquired of the darky.

"In the fust car, I guess, boss."

"I must see him at once. That old rascal must be caught and turned over to the police at the next stopping place. I'll bet he's some professional that makes a business of robbing passengers in the sleeping-cars."

Vance then hastened to the third Pullman forward and found the conductor in his private compartment in the car. He told his story, to the man's surprise, and requested that the train be searched for the white-headed rascal.

Several of the train-hands were pressed into service, and after Vance had accurately described the personal appearance of the man who had tried to drug him, for the presumed purpose of robbing him the more easily, the search was begun of the cars.

Cooke, knowing that he could not escape from a train running over fifty miles an hour, felt that his only chance would be to remove his disguise and trust to luck. He dashed into the lavatory of the middle Pullman, hurriedly got rid of his white wig and beard, and washed the make-up from his face.

He could not change his clothes, but as he wore a plain dark business suit that did not greatly matter. When he had resumed his natural appearance he looked nothing at all like the old gentleman character in which he had been masquerading. Through a crack in the wash-room door he saw Vance go forward. He judged correctly that the boy was after the conductor of the Pullman coaches to tell him what had happened, and to cause a search to be instituted for the aggressor. He noticed that Vance did not have his case of designs with him, and a daring idea took possession of his brain, which was nothing less than to venture back into the rear Pullman and search the boy's bunk for it while he was absent.

The rascal went directly to Vance's berth, pulled the pillows aside and saw the coveted case lying on the top of the mattress. He grabbed it and rushed out on the rear platform, where he began to consider whether he dare take the desperate risk of leaping from the swiftly moving train. In the meantime the search went on through the cars, beginning with the smoker and continuing thence to the day coaches, and finally back to the sleepers.

The search became more careful than ever when the party struck the Pullmans. They looked into all wash-rooms and other compartments, but did not disturb any of the sleepers, though every vacant berth, of which there were only a few, was examined. Cooke, looking through the rear door, saw the searching party enter the last car.

Although he looked nothing like the old man they were in search of, his presence on the platform would be regarded with suspicion, and the moment Vance got a square look at him he was bound to recognize him, and would no doubt cause his arrest on the safe robbery charge. At the best Cooke felt that his position was desperate. Suddenly the locomotive blew its whistle for down brakes. Then the rascally salesman felt the jolting of the car as the airbrakes were applied. The speed of the train was decreasing. With a thrill of satisfaction Cooke jumped down on the lowest step, ready to spring to the ground at the proper moment. He had the small black case in his hands containing Vance's precious designs, and his wicked heart was now exultant at the thought that things had come his way at last. Three toots from the engine and the brakes were removed from the wheels. The train began to regain headway. Cooke knew he had to jump now, if ever, and he sprang into the darkness. As he did so the search party came out on the rear platform and Vance, who had discovered the loss of his case, saw the shadowy figure leap from the last step. He was satisfied that it was the little old man who had outwitted them up to

that point, and that he had stolen his precious case. Without waiting to consider the question further, for it was absolutely necessary that he should recover his case with the designs, he rushed down the steps and sprang from the train, too.

CHAPTER XIV.—In Which Our Hero Is Treated To a Surprise.

Vance landed on the roadbed with a shock that nearly knocked the senses out of him, although he had taken the precaution to jump with the train. Without the loss of many moments he started back along the track for the purpose of getting on the track of the little old man who had taken his case. He hadn't the slightest suspicion that the party was far from being an old man, and was really Cooke, the ex-salesman of Mr. Appleby's store.

He hurried along in the gloom of the night, peering ahead for a glimpse of the man he was after. Fortune played somewhat into his hands, because Cooke was dazed by his fall from the train, and was sitting alongside the tracks followed by the express when Vance came along. Cooke saw him, but did not recognize him in the darkness. The idea that Vance or anybody else had followed him off the train was the last thing that would have occurred to the rascal's mind.

He supposed that the newcomer was somebody tramping the track, maybe to his home in that vicinity. Vance stopped in front of him. He didn't recognize Cooke, but he could see one thing, that this man was not the white-haired rascal he was in search of. His first impression was that the man was drunk.

"Hello! What's the matter?" he said.

Cooke recognized Vance's voice in some astonishment, and looking at him closer saw that it was indeed the boy himself. How the dickens came he to be there and speeding away on the train as he supposed he was? was the question that staggered the rascally salesman. Cooke was immediately seized with a funk. He looked around for the case of designs, which had fallen out of his hands when he struck the ground, and picking it up made a sudden break for the woods on one side of the railroad. Dark as it was, Vance recognized the case with no little surprise, for his mind associated it in company with the old white-haired rascal.

That fact did not prevent him from making an effort to regain possession of it.

"Come back here with that case!" he yelled at Cooke, rushing after him as he spoke.

Cooke paid no attention to him, all his energies being devoted to putting as great a distance between himself and the owner of the case as possible. Vance's "monkey" was up, however. He intended to get his case of designs back at any risk.

Who this person was who now had it in his possession, or how he had got hold of it, was a mystery to the boy, for he certainly bore no resemblance to the white-haired old man the young salesman was after.

"Well, he won't hold on to it any longer than it takes me to catch him," muttered Vance, following the sounds in the wood made by Cooke in

his flight. "If he puts up a fight to keep it I'll give him all that's coming to him."

After a fifteen-minute chase, during which Vance tried in vain to overhaul the man with the case, all sounds suddenly ceased ahead, leaving the boy at a loss to conjecture what trick the fugitive had adopted to insure his escape. Vance hunted around for a quarter of an hour without result, and then was forced to admit to himself that the man had fooled him successfully.

"What shall I do now?" the young salesman asked himself in great chagrin. "Here I'm in the woods, probably miles from the nearest town, or even from the nearest house for all I know to the contrary. My case of designs, on which my reputation and future depend, may now be lost to me forever. Talk about hard luck. It's simply fierce. But I'm not going to give up all hope, though things do look about as unsatisfactory as they well could. I'll remain around this locality for a week or more if necessary to get on the track of my property. The chap who has it will find on examination of the case that its contents are of no use to him. That's no satisfaction to me, however. He may destroy the designs, or throw them away, when he finds out that his prize-package is a gold brick as far as he is concerned."

Vance had never been up against such a hard deal in his life as he was facing now. It was enough to take the starch out of him, but it didn't. He was a boy with grit, and he never gave up the ship as long as one plank held to another.

There was no use monkeying around in the wood in the darkness any longer. The only thing he could do was to go straight forward and trust to luck. He had no idea how far the woods extended away from the railroad tracks, but he believed it couldn't be far. He walked sturdily ahead, trying to keep his courage up. He had left New York full of hope at seven o'clock that evening, and now five hours later things were all at sixes and sevens with him.

"Life is full of ups and downs," he muttered. "I suppose a fellow has to take the bitter with the sweet. But the jolt I've got is simply the worst ever."

As he breathed the thought he came out of the woods on to a road. A considerable distance ahead he saw a faint light which he guessed came from a house.

"As it looks as if it might rain, and I've lost track of the man who has my property, I guess I can't do any better than go on to that house and ask for shelter over night," thought the boy.

Fifteen minutes later he saw the outlines of a two-story building looming through the gloom. The light came from a window on the ground floor. The house faced right on the road, and a wide veranda ran the entire length of its front. Vance walked up to the window and looked in. One glance caused him to utter a gasp of astonishment. Sitting at a cheap wooden table, with a bottle of liquor between them, and glasses in their hands, were two men, one of whom the boy easily recognized as Cooke, Mr. Appleby's former salesman who was wanted for his connection with the safe robbery, while the other was the scoundrel Blizzard, who had bossed the train-wrecking job on the New York Central road which Vance had prevented from coming to a head.

"Well, who'd think of seeing Cooke away out here in the wilds of Pennsylvania?" breathed Vance. "Hobnobbing with that rascally train-wrecker, too. They are talking together as if they were old friends. Great Scott! If that isn't my case of designs lying on the floor beside him. How in thunder did it come into his possession? Why, he must have been the fellow who ran against the railroad, and afterward chased and lost in the woods. He must have seen the white-haired man jump from the Pullman. Maybe the shock knocked him unconscious, and Cooke took advantage of the fact to secure the case. I'd like to hear what they are talking about."

The top sash was open a few inches, but the bottom one was closed tight, and only a faint murmur reached Vance's ears. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out his jack-knife. Opening the big blade he jabbed it under the lower sash and pried it up a little. Repeated efforts enabled him to raise it high enough for him to get his fingers under it, then he pushed it up a couple of inches. Placing his ear to the opening he was now able to hear all that was said in the room. The very first words that Vance heard caused his face to assume an unconscious expression of astonishment. Cooke was telling Blizzard how he had been masquerading on the Chicago Limited as a white-haired old man in order to capture the case of valuable furniture designs now in his possession.

"Great Cæsar!" gasped Vance. "I see through the whole thing now. Cooke found out somehow that I was going West on a special mission and he made up his mind to queer the business, thus getting square with me and getting back at Mr. Appleby at the same time. He was the white-haired man who boarded the Pullman at Philadelphia, and jumped off the train here. Gee! But he's a nervy rascal!"

While those thoughts flashed through the boy's brain he was listening to Cooke's story. The ex-salesman told Blizzard how, while attempting to chloroform his intended victim, the boy woke up unexpectedly and frustrated his design. Then he went on to tell how he had dispensed with his disguise to avoid recognition, for he knew that the cars would be searched for a little white-haired old man. He described how he had taken advantage of Vinton's absence from the last car to go to his berth, grab the case, which he found where he suspected to the rear platform with the half-formed intention of leaping from the train at the risk of his life.

The rapidity with which the train was going discouraged that plan, but at the critical moment the speed of the express slackened up for some reason unknown to him, and he finally ventured to jump, getting a bad shaking up, but receiving no injury.

Then when he thought the worst of his troubles were over who should appear on the scene but the boy himself, who, he argued, must have seen him jump and had followed him. With a chuckle of satisfaction he went on to describe how he had eluded his young pursuer in the wood, and seeing a light shining in the distance he had hurried forward to take refuge in the house he supposed the light emanated from.

"Guess my surprise on finding you here, Dick Blizzard," he concluded with a grin. "The very

last person in the world I expected to run across. Well, I'm mighty glad to see you, bet your life. If Vance Vinton should find his way to this house we'll give him a reception he won't forget for the rest of his life."

"I'll bet you he won't," growled Blizzard with a dark look and a smothered imprecation. "He's the chap who queered a job I was engaged in more'n a year ago."

"How can you be sure of that? You haven't seen the boy I'm speaking about."

"I remember his name. It was in all the papers at the time and I made a note of it, intending to get back at him some day, even if I had to wait years."

"Tell me about the affair," asked Cooke, curiously.

Blizzard, after some hesitation, finally told the ex-salesman about the attempt he and several companions made to wreck a New York Central express train at the mouth of a certain tunnel, and how their project was defeated by Vance Vinton.

"Well, upon my word, that boy is a corker," replied Cooke. "However, I've got the better of him this time. He'll have to go back to New York and report that his case of designs was stolen from him by a white-haired old reprobate," with a chuckle. "I fancy he won't hold his head so high as he's lately been in the habit of doing, and Appleby will change his opinion about him being such a paragon of smartness."

"I wish I could get my hands on him," growled Blizzard. "He wouldn't get back to New York in a hurry."

"What would you do to him?"

"What would I do to him, eh? Oh, I wouldn't do a thing to him," he grinned malevolently. "I'd—"

At that moment there reached their ears the sound of a racket outside the window.

CHAPTER XV.—In Which Our Hero Recovers His Property.

Both men sprang to their feet, rushed to the window and looked out. As they couldn't see very well through the glass what was going on Blizzard threw up the sash. He recognized one of the two pals who were living with him at the house struggling with a boy.

"Hello, Slivers," he asked, "what's the trouble?"

"I caught this chap spyin' at yer through the winder, so I jest nabbed him."

"Isn't that the boy you were talkin' about, Cooke?" said Blizzard.

"That's him, though I can't see his face very well," answered the ex-salesman.

"Yank him into the house, Slivers. You can do it without help, can't you?" said the train-wrecker.

The rascal, securing a fresh grip around the boy's body, pushed him around the building to a back door which was opened by Blizzard with the lamp in his hand. A moment or two later Vance found himself in the room he had been inspecting through the window, and in the presence of Cooke, who greeted him with a derisive smile.

"Glad to see you, Vinton," chuckled the ex-salesman. "This is an unexpected pleasure, upon my word."

Vance eyed him without saying a word.

"You don't seem particularly happy, my young salesman," grinned Cooke. "Did you sprain your suspenders getting off the express in a hurry?"

"I suppose it gives you a lot of satisfaction to have some fun at my expense," replied Vance with some dignity in his tone. "I don't see where you have anything on me except the possession of my property which you stole from my berth in the Pullman, and of which you can make no use whatever."

"That's enough to have on you. Your journey out West will now be a failure, and when you sneak back to the store with your yarn about how you lost your designs there will be something doing between you and the boss. You won't be the curly-headed boy any more, I'll bet a hat."

"So you went to the trouble and expense of following me out of Philadelphia just to gratify your feeling of malice against me?"

"I did it to get square on you, and I guess I've succeeded."

"I might expect such a low-down trick at your hands. A man who will deliberately take part in a scheme to rob his employer will—"

"That's enough!" snarled Cooke angrily.

"The truth hurts, does it?"

"You'll find that there is something that hurts worse than the truth, my young buck, before Dick Blizzard and I get through with you."

"I reckon he will," interposed the train-wrecker with an ugly look. "I s'pose you don't remember me, you little monkey."

"I've seen you before," replied Vance coolly.

"I'll bet you have. You saw me more'n a year ago up New York State. You butted into a job of mine and queered it. I ain't forgotten you since. Nobody ever does me an injury that I don't get back at him some time for it. Well, the time has come now for me to settle my score with you. I'm goin' to give you a receipt in full. After you get it nothin' in this world'll trouble you much, I'll gamble on that. When does the night freight pass the bridge below here, Slivers?" asked the train-wrecker.

"About half-past four."

"What time is it now?"

"Nearly one."

"Take this chap by the arm. I'm going to lock him into one of the rooms upstairs till we want him," said Blizzard.

With a stout rascal on either side of him Vance felt that to make any resistance would avail him little, and might result in his getting roughly handled, so he walked upstairs at Blizzard's order, and soon found himself a prisoner in an unfurnished square room at the back of the house.

His captors took the precaution to tie him to a chair which they introduced into the room for that purpose, and he was then left to his own reflections, which were not the pleasantest in the world at that moment, as the reader may guess.

Most persons under similar circumstances would feel discouraged at the outlook, for Vance knew he could expect little consideration from Blizzard, who was about as hard a scoundrel as walked on two feet. But, as we've remarked several times before, Vinton was a boy with grit, and it required something out of the ordinary to shake his nerve.

Instead of yielding to despair and letting mat-

ters take their course on the ground that he couldn't help himself, Vance was no sooner alone than he began to try and release himself from the chair. Vance was up against a hard proposition when he set out to free himself from the chair, for Blizzard had tied him pretty carefully. An hour passed away before he made the slightest headway. Perseverance is certain to bring its reward in the long run, and Vance got his in the yielding of the cords about his wrists. At last he was able to work one hand out of limbo, and the other easily followed. Then by tugging at the loosened strands he got his right arm free. That was enough to insure success, for thrusting his hand into his pocket he got his jack-knife into action, and the cords fell away from him in speedy succession.

That left him a free boy so far as physical action was concerned. He had yet to escape from the room, the door of which he supposed was locked. Vance slipped off his shoes and glided over to one of the windows. He found no difficulty in raising the lower sash. Looking out he judged that it was a twenty-foot drop to the ground. He wasn't afraid to attempt that, and he was about to get out when he thought of his case of designs. He hated to leave the house without that, yet he did not see how he could regain possession of it as things stood. He wondered if the door really was locked. He tip-toed over to it and found that it was not, because there was no key to it. Suddenly a daring plan occurred to the boy's mind by which he thought he might recover his case. He slipped across the landing and opened a door on the opposite side.

This was furnished with a double bed, chairs and other furniture, and was undoubtedly the sleeping-room for one or two of the occupants of the house.

Then he returned to the empty room. He knew that it was right above the apartment where Cooke, Blizzard and probably Slivers were still enjoying themselves over their liquor. Seizing a chair he raised it and then threw it on the floor, making a racket that was certain to attract attention, and no doubt would draw Blizzard and Slivers upstairs to investigate.

The open window would suggest how their missing prisoner had left the house. Vance figured that the three men would then rush outside to recapture him. That would give him the chance to slip downstairs and secure his case. Then he could hide somewhere in the house until the men returned from their unsuccessful pursuit.

The idea was clever, but risky. It worked out all right, however. The noise brought Blizzard upstairs, by which time Vance had retreated to the room opposite. Blizzard uttered a roar of rage when he opened the door of the vacant room and found that his prisoner had apparently decamped from the house through the open window.

He rushed to the window and looked out, then he dashed downstairs. Confusion ensued in the room below, and then Vance heard all the men talking outside. Vance ran across into the vacant room again and listened at the window. He heard Blizzard direct Slivers to go in one direction, Cooke in another, while he took a third route himself.

"Now is my chance to get the case," breathed the boy.

He ran downstairs and entered the room below. There was the case still beside the chair that had been occupied by Cooke. To grab it and slip out of the apartment was the work of a moment, with Vance.

CHAPTER XVI.—In Which Our Hero Achieves Both Fame And Fortune.

Vance retreated to a vacant room on the ground floor and waited for the men to return. It was some time before they did. They came back one at a time, and Blizzard was in a particularly bad humor. Cooke did not at once notice the disappearance of the case of designs, but when he did he raised a howl.

"How could he have taken it?" said Blizzard, referring to Vance. "He made his escape through the window above."

"He must have come back while we were hunting for him and sneaked it away," answered Cooke.

"If he did that he's got an all-fired nerve," interjected Slivers. "I'll bet he wouldn't have taken the chances if he knew that we were going to tie him down on the track used by the night freight."

"Look here, Blizzard, how far is the nearest station from here?" asked Cooke.

"Ten miles west."

"He's certain to inquire his way there. We ought to go and hang around in the vicinity of it. Then when he comes along we could grab him."

"He won't get there till after daylight, and then there'll be too many people around for us to work any game like that successfully," replied the trainwrecker.

"Come on. We must make another attempt to catch him before he can find his way to the station. He's no doubt walking along the track westward by this time looking for the nearest station on the line. There's a block-house with an operator about a mile from here. He'll inquire there and will learn how far ahead the station is. We must chase after him as hard as we can. There is a chance that we may overtake him before daylight if we lose no time," said Blizzard.

The recapture of the escaped prisoner being a matter of paramount importance to the three rascals, they set out in pursuit at once, quite unconscious of the fact that the boy they wanted was in the house all the time, and had heard every word they said. Vance chuckled to himself as he watched them start for the railroad.

"They're going to walk the ties westward hoping to catch me napping. Well, I'll start off in the opposite direction and then I'll be safe from them. I'll keep to the road and make inquiries at the first house I come to," he said to himself.

He waited a good quarter of an hour before setting out, then he retraced his steps in the direction of the woods. Although he had lost his night's rest he felt quite chipper because he had got his precious case back. He had had a pretty strenuous experience since leaving Philadelphia, but he felt sure it would do him good, and make him more cautious in the future about taking up with chance acquaintances. Cooke had managed

to deceive him completely, but he felt satisfied that the rascal wouldn't try the game on him the second time. Vance took occasional rests along the road during the next two hours, and then dawn began to lighten up the eastern sky. A turn in the road brought a good-sized village into view a few miles away, and the people were up and about by the time he reached it. He stopped into the first store he came to and inquired his way to the nearest station in that direction. He found it was at the town of Dundee, twelve miles away.

"I'll have to hire a rig to take me there," he thought.

He went to the small hotel in the place and registered for breakfast. Then he made arrangements with the proprietor for a horse and buggy to carry him to Dundee. He reached the railroad town at ten o'clock. He went directly to the station and told the agent about his night's experiences.

"My suitcase is on the Pullman car 'Minnehaha.' The train must be within a few hours run to Chicago by this time. It is due there about three this afternoon. A despatch ought to be sent to the Pullman conductor telling him to hand the suitcase over to the baggage-master at Chicago when he gets there, so I can reclaim it on my arrival."

The agent promised to have the despatch sent in time to reach the conductor.

"Now where can I catch the morning Chicago Limited from New York?" asked Vance.

"Pittsburg is the best place," said the agent. "There will be an express for the West along this way in an hour. It stops here. You can board it and leave it at Pittsburg for the Limited if you want to. You can arrange with the Pullman agent at Pittsburg for a berth to Chicago. He'll probably issue you a new ticket in place of your other one covering your berth in the 'Minnehaha,' as your case is sufficiently unusual to warrant consideration."

Vance thanked the agent for his courtesy, telephoned the town police about Blizzard, Cooke and Slivers, who, he said, might be captured in the neighborhood of the house down the road if no time was lost, and caught the express for Pittsburg at 11:30.

He reached Chicago in due time, recovered his suitcase, and after a day's rest in the Windy City left for Springfield. While at Chicago he wrote a full account of his stirring adventure on the road to Mr. Appleby.

Vance also wrote an account of his experience to Gertie, and he filled up a few extra pages with something that was nearer his heart. In all the girl received quite a bulky letter from him, as well as several picture post-cards for her album. On Vance's arrival at Springfield he went at once to the Springfield Furniture Manufacturing Company and had his first interview with the general manager. The order he had to place was such an important and expensive one that he received the greatest consideration from the manager. He was shown over the establishment, which occupied a block of ground, and made a careful investigation as to the capability of the house to turn out the order in the high-class way he required it to be executed.

Vance had a second interview with the manager before he finally decided to give the order to the establishment. He received a written guarantee that the work would be made exactly according to his designs and specifications. He found that the Springfield Company was apparently able to turn out everything except the special upholstery material for the salon set. It was necessary to have that manufactured at Lingerie, in France, which has a world-wide reputation for delicate and expensive work of the kind. Vance, after starting the order, returned to New York to enter into negotiations with the French house. The designs and specifications were forwarded to Lingerie and the boy impatiently awaited a reply from the other side. It came in due time. The French establishment agreed to fill the order to the letter, but the price was a heavy one. Before giving the order Vance called on Mr. Ward and told him that the salon set would cost him \$10,000 more than the original estimate if the upholstery material was made according to his idea.

He received permission to go ahead and the order was accordingly sent to France.

The furniture was ready for delivery two months before the house was ready for it. When it was finally received in New York, every piece carefully packed in a special crate, Vance personally attended to its delivery and unpacking at the expensive dwelling on upper Fifth avenue.

When it was placed in the different rooms awaiting its reception Mr. Ward was on hand to view it, and he admitted that it was all that Vance had claimed for it. He invited a number of reporters and artists to inspect the house and its wonderful furniture and imported gems of art, and the printed accounts, illustrated with photographs, created a sensation among connoisseurs.

Many multi-millionaires, after seeing the results of Vance's genius, commissioned him to design furniture for them, though on a less expensive plan. The result was that Vance found enough work to set up a studio in his special line, while still continuing his connection with Mr. Appleby.

It was about this time that Cooke, Blizzard and Slivers were captured in St. Louis and brought on to New York. The former was prosecuted by Mr. Appleby, while Blizzard and his associate were put through by the New York Central Railroad Company. The three were convicted on Vance's evidence and received long terms in Sing Sing.

Vance was on the highroad to both fame and fortune, when he asked Bunker Garnett and Mrs. Garnett for the hand of their daughter in marriage, and received a favorable reply from them.

A few months later he and Gertie were married and spent their honeymoon in Europe, where they did not fail to visit Lingerie and inspect the establishment that had furnished the upholstery for the salon set in the Ward mansion.

Today Vance's name is a household word in the artistic furniture trade, and everybody who knows him refers to him as the young salesman who made his mark.

Next week's issue will contain "TED, THE BROKER'S BOY; or, STARTING OUT FOR HIMSELF."

WILL, THE WAGON BOY

or, The Diamonds that Came by Express

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

They returned upstairs, still meeting no one. Now the doctor proved himself an expert in more ways than one.

Producing a bit of stiff wire, he bent one end of it in a peculiar way, and in a minute had unlocked the door.

"In with you, Will," he said. "We will know the truth in a few seconds now."

They closed the door behind them, and stood in the office, from which Karl Kutter's belongings had all been removed.

"There's the paper in the chimney, all right," said the doctor. "It doesn't look as though it had been disturbed. We may be right in it yet, Will. Here! You are taller than I am. Stand on my back and see what you can find."

Will obeyed, and it was with trembling hand that he removed the paper from the chimney.

"There is nothing here," he said, as he thrust his hand in.

"Nothing! Nothing!" cried the doctor in a tone of intense disappointment.

Will tried again, but with no other result than getting his hand a little blacker than it had been before.

He jumped down and the doctor began pacing the room in a great state of agitation.

"I was a fool to delay," he said. "I might have got in somehow. Why didn't I come last night and take my chances, police or no police."

Evidently Doctor Pajaro placed implicit confidence in Will's story of the pictures in the light.

It was not so with Will, himself, however.

He had been very doubtful about it from the first, and now he regarded it as all nonsense. If it had not been for the fear of arrest he would have lost no time in pulling away from the doctor, but with the Tombs staring him in the face he did not know what to do.

For some minutes the doctor continued to pace the floor, snapping his fingers and muttering to himself.

"What is to be done? What is to be done?" he kept saying. "The diamonds were certainly here last night. Who could have got them? Could it have been that man with the scarred face?"

"Why don't you go to the agent of the building and ask him who the fellow is?" inquired Will. "If the man has really rented the office there will be no trouble in finding out what his name is."

"No," said the doctor. "I'll take you back to Bumjado's. There is only one way of finding out that is quick and sure?"

"More pictures in the light?"

"Yes."

"Doctor, I don't want to have anything more to do with that business."

"You must," said the doctor fiercely. "You will stick to me, Will, if you know when you are well off."

"It proved all humbug once. Won't it be the same way again?"

"Who says it proved all humbug? I say it didn't. Somebody has been here since, and has taken the diamonds. I know, and yet, and yet—"

"Well, and yet what?" demanded Will.

"And yet it seems to me that the diamonds are still here in this room—at least, that the Great Ghorgee is. I wouldn't answer for the rest."

"There is so little chance in this room to hide anything with all the furniture out of it; there is only that pile of rubbish over there."

The pile of rubbish was over by the window. Some one had swept up the place after Karl Kutter's belongings had been removed, and everything in the way of waste paper and similar trash had been left there in a heap.

Will walked over to it as he spoke, and began to push it about with his foot.

Doctor Pajaro paid no attention to him. He was still walking about with his hand pressed to his forehead when all at once he was startled out of his reverie by an exclamation from Will.

"Why, doctor! Look here!"

A fierce exclamation in his own language escaped Doctor Pajaro.

There stood Will over by the rubbish pile, holding in his hands two glittering objects. Huge diamonds they looked like, and yet if they had been either one of them would have been worth a fortune.

"Quick! Let me see! Where did you find them?" cried the doctor, springing to his side.

"Here in the rubbish! They can't be diamonds!"

"No, no! They are imitations of the crown jewels of Europe. This one is a copy of the famous Kho-i-noor, of King Edward's crown; the other of a noted Dutch diamond. Get your wits together, Will! Don't they look like the imitation stones you saw in the box when you were taking in those pictures in the light?"

"They do—they certainly do."

"Then it is all plain enough. Whoever found the package in the chimney knew what they were, and threw them away for fear they would be identified. Look! Search! We must go through every bit of this pile of stuff. The Great Ghorgee may have been thrown away with the rest. It is here! Search, Will! Search! I—I—I—Oh, I shall go mad if I miss it now!"

The doctor was going on almost like a lunatic.

He dropped on his hands and knees and began to pull over the pile, and Will, catching his enthusiasm, went at it, too.

"Here's one!" cried the doctor, "Glass!"

"Here's another! It's blue!" exclaimed Will.

"Imitation of the big Hope diamond, about which there was such a fuss in the papers a few years back. We are on the right track! The thief has not been fooled. He knew these things were bogus, and he was afraid they would be identified if they were found on him, so he threw them all away. Ten to one the Great Ghorgee went with them. We are bound to find it—we must find it!"

"What's this?" demanded Will, suddenly holding up a big glittering object as large as a pigeon's egg. "This is glass sure!"

With a fierce cry, Dr. Pajaro snatched it from Will's hand, pressed it to his lips, bowed his head, and began muttering unintelligible words, as if in prayer.

"Is it the diamond? Tell me, doctor! Is it the diamond?" cried Will, whose curiosity was not to be restrained.

Doctor Pajaro sprang to his feet.

"It is!" he cried. "You have found it! For thousands of years it was the eye of the idol in the temple of the Ghorgee the shrine of the people over which my forefathers reigned. Will, your fortune is made. When my people come to know that through you this gem has been returned to its proper place, they will worship you as a god. Come, our work here is done. Let us go."

A step was heard on the stairs as they approached the door. There were other steps following. Doctor Pajaro turned pale.

"What does it mean?" he gasped. "Can the detectives be on our track?"

Hastily thrusting his hand inside his vest, he concealed the diamond.

The sound of the footsteps had now ceased.

For a few moments they stood breathlessly listening.

It was probably some one going to one of the rooms on the floor below," whispered Will.

"And yet it sounded as if it was on this floor.

"I know it. Shall we go?"

"We must. We can't jump out of the window, and we can't stay here."

The doctor advanced toward the door, and threw it open, falling back with a fierce exclamation as he did so.

There, facing them, stood the tall man with the slouch hat whom they had dodged in Elizabeth the night before.

"Ah, there! Good morning!" he said, with a smile. "Doctor Pajaro, I believe?"

CHAPTER XIII.—Detective Keene.

In comparison with either Doctor Pajaro or Will the man who filled the doorway was a giant.

His face bore every indication of strong character and a determined will.

"Well? Did you find anything?" he asked. "How have you made out?"

Doctor Pajaro pulled himself together on the instant.

Will was small, but he was smaller, and the man in the doorway was as big as both put together.

He saw that any attempt to escape would be the merest nonsense. Diplomacy alone could get them out of this latest fix.

"My name is Pajaro, yes," he said. "I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir. I don't know what you mean."

"You have seen me before, all right, doctor," replied the man. "You were looking at me pretty hard last night when you gave me the slip on Jersey avenue over in Elizabeth. That was a clever piece of business. It didn't trouble me much, though, for I felt pretty sure you would come my way again, and so it has proved."

"Indeed!" replied the doctor. "I hoped you were going to introduce yourself; if you don't care to, perhaps you will be good enough to stand aside and let us pass."

"No," replied the man. "I can't do that, for my business with you is of the highest importance. I'll introduce myself, though. I am Detective Keene, of the Rooney & Nolan Agency. I've been shadowing you these two weeks."

"For what?"

"Doctor, you are not my kind, and I don't profess to know your kind very well, but I take you to be a man of sense, or you could not hold the position in medical circles which I am told you do hold. Before we go any further in this business let me put a proposition to you. On the floor below is an officer awaiting my call and prepared to arrest both of you fellows if I give the word."

"On what ground?"

"Wait. Let me finish putting my proposition. Which would you rather do—go quietly with me to my house and talk matters over and see if we can't come to an understanding, or have me turn you and this boy over to the police to be dealt with by the strong arm of the law?"

"And that's your proposition?"

"Yes."

"Let me fully understand you. Is this a question of graft?"

"That's putting it in a rather disagreeable way. I will admit, however, that I am not in the detective business for my health."

"Of what are we to be charged if you turn us over to the police?"

"It might be murder."

The doctor looked at him long and earnestly. Detective Keene returned his intense gaze with a sarcastic smile.

"You can't do it," he said. "It is no use for you to try to hypnotize me. That has been tried on me. It never works, my friend."

"Yes, yes! You mistake," replied the doctor, earnestly. "I was only thinking. If I agree to your proposition, how do we go?"

"There is a cab at the door."

"Where is your house?"

"Uptown on the West Side. What does it matter where it is?"

"Why not explain more fully your intention. Your policeman seems to be waiting very patiently. Why not let him wait a little longer, and tell me what you are driving at, my friend?"

"No," said the detective. "We don't talk here. It is either with me or the Police that you have to deal. Doctor Pajaro, it is for you to choose, and your choice must be made at once, or I give the whistle. That done, the only dealings you and I will ever have will be through the law."

Doctor Pajaro turned to Will. That he was dreadfully agitated was easily seen.

"What do you say?" he asked.

"You must decide," replied Will, who was pretty badly frightened himself.

"The boy is not in it," said the detective, hastily. "Come, doctor! It's up to you."

An immense sense of relief came to Will.

If he was not in it then it was not him the detective was after, but the doctor himself. What could it mean?

(To be continued)

GOOD READING

FORD REWARDS BOY WITH GIFT OF WATCH

Rockefeller gives away shiny new dimes, but Ford gives away nickel-plated watches.

Robert Duxbury, six-year-old pupil in the Detroit School for the Deaf, is the proud owner today of a large nickel-plated watch and chain, a gift of Henry Ford.

Ford became attached to Roberts because of the boy's enthusiasm in a demonstration dance given by his school at the Ford Dearborn plant.

Robert will never hear the ticking of his watch, but his treasured gift is beyond purchasing power of millionaires or kings.

NOVEL LANDING LIGHTS

Glass-covered parallel trenches in which "neon" light tubes are installed have been dug across the British landing field at Croydon to aid flyers to descend safely in fogs. The reddish glow of the lamps, it has been found, penetrates the mist more effectively than other kinds of light. Between the tubes is a "leader cable" which affects a sensitive instrument in an airplane flying above it. Having been guided to the field by radio, the pilot, after picking up the boundaries of the area by means of the cable, can circle around, gauging his altitude by means of the action of the cable on the instrument until the lights themselves are visible and the landing can be made with little or no risk of accident.

USE FOR PREDATORY FISH

Certain fishes in the sea destroy large number of food fishes and, besides, consume much of the feed that the food fishes depend upon for life. These destructive fishes, according to the associated fishery interests, are sharks of all kinds, whales, dolphin, and many others of the predatory tribes. Reference is made to the mortality among menhaden because of the ruthless attacks made upon them by the larger and stronger fish. Man, it is pointed out, is also responsible for the destruction of large quantities of menhaden.

"In the waters of the Atlantic and Gulf from Maine to Texas," according to the fishing interests, "the quantity of menhaden taken aggregate more than 55 per cent. of the total quantity of all fish taken along the coasts. The average landing value of this species is about 50 cents per 100 pounds. Very few menhaden are used as food for man; practically the entire yield is converted into oil and fertilizer.

"The average value of these fish after manufacture is increased to about 85 cents per 100 pounds, based on the quantity of raw material and the value of the manufactured product. It is the great quantities of fish available in the waters and the comparative time ease of capture that makes the industry profitable. By using the by-products of the food-fish industry, establishing fisheries for predacious fishes and utilizing these materials for oils, meat and fertilizer, there is little doubt that the industry could supply finished materials in as large or even larger quantities than at present, and of at least an equal value."

The report also says that shark-liver oil is

used medicinally to a limited extent in some countries and that:

"Undoubtedly the therapeutic value lies in the fat-soluble vitamin content. If it were carefully prepared from fresh livers at a low temperature in vacuo, it might be used to make a satisfactory substitute for cod liver oil. Researches should be carried out to show which species of sharks have livers of particularly high Vitamin A content. Fisheries for sharks, dog-fish, skates, rays, whales, porpoises and many other marine animals would be most helpful in ridding the seas of these destructive agencies and furnish materials of great industrial value."

A MYSTERIOUS FRIEND

Bacteriophage, that mysterious principle or organism, as yet unseen by any scientist though used daily by many, has been discovered in a new role as devourer of the deadliest of bacteria, says Science Magazine, by Dr. Paul F. Clark and Alice Shiedt Clark, of the University of Wisconsin, and Dr. L. O. Dutton, of the Methodist Hospital, Memphis, Tenn.

The most dangerous of the disease-causing organisms which the three researchers have discovered to be a part of the bill of fare of the bacteriophage is known as the hemolytic streptococcus, or blood-dissolving chain-germ, because of its fatal action in the blood, causing one of the worst types of blood poisoning. It is also the causal organism of scarlet fever, and of one of the deadliest types of pneumonia.

Cultures of this organism in test tubes grow vigorously and make the fluid cloudy, but the introduction of a little material containing the bacteriophage soon makes it clear again, due to the death and disintegration of the disease germs. In Doctor Dutton's experiments, this clearing-up of the cultures took place in as short a time as thirty-six hours.

Bacteriophage, which literally translated means "bacterium eater," is a puzzling something discovered by the researches of F. W. Twort, a British scientist, and F. d'Herelle, a French Canadian. Bacteriologists are very much at odds over it, some claiming that it is a living organism, or at least a living substance, and others maintaining that though it does some things that living beings do it does not have all the attributes of life.

If it has an organized body at all it must be exceedingly minute, for it has never been seen even with the ultra-microscope, and it can pass through the pores of a fine porcelain filter. Moreover, it is not killed by high temperatures that are fatal to all other known organisms. Yet when even a little of the fluid containing it is added to a culture of bacteria, the latter are soon dead, no matter how numerous they are nor how little there was of the bacteriophage to begin with.

It is this apparent power to multiply itself that sets the bacteriophage apart from even the most complex of lifeless chemicals, for lifeless things do not have the power of self-propagation. Much research on this puzzling stuff is now in progress, from which far-reaching effects in medicine and sanitation may result.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

DIES AT AGE OF 117

Henry Lorenz, 117 years old, a farmer of Pleasantdale, northern Saskatchewan, died recently. According to family records, he was born in Austria May 9, 1805. Up to a year ago Lorenz was a heavy smoker, but the increased price of the weed caused him to stop.

A SILVER MAP

A silver map of the world, exhibited at the Royal Geographical Society, England, is said to be the best of four such maps in existence. It is a thin circular plate of silver about three inches in diameter and commemorates Drake's voyage around the world.

HUGE AERIAL MASTS

So huge are the masts supporting the aerials of the new superpower radio station at Rugby, England, that there is an electrical elevator, having a capacity of three persons in each mast. The masts are 820 feet high, which is half again as high as the Washington Monument. There are twelve of these masts carrying three miles of aerial.

EUROPEAN DEBT

The European debt to the United States amounts to \$11,000,000,000. There are people there, like the Greenbackers in our country, who will object to paying the debt in gold when the United States has two-thirds of the gold in the world. It is not expected that any great portion of the debt will be paid in gold, but in goods and in securities, if it is paid at all.

SMALL ENGINES ARE COMING

Smaller engines, normally strong enough to run a motor car only on a level, but reinforced by a supercharger powerful enough to take it up the steepest hill, will soon be used generally on automobile, according to G. R. Short of General Motors. Such engines, he says in Popular Science Monthly, have been used successfully on airplanes and racing automobiles, and should be practicable in reducing the production cost of trucks and pleasure cars.

BIT HIM, SAYS POLICEMAN

Because, it is alleged, she bit Lieutenant Herman Boeze of the Nyack Police Department on the wrist, Mrs. A. P. Moritz, wife of a real estate operator of Montclair, N. J., has been held for the Rockland County Grand Jury on a charge of assault.

Mrs. Moritz, with her son, Walter, 21 years old, and her daughter, Florence, 20, was riding through Nyack in her automobile the other night and was arrested and charged with speeding. At police headquarters the son went in to answer to the charge, but was ordered to bring his mother to court also. Lieutenant Boeze went out to get Mrs. Moritz. He charges that she grabbed him by the arm and dragged him into the tonneau and bit him on the wrist. After furnishing bail she and her family were permitted to go on to Montclair.

LAUGHS

Silliwon—Do you believe in long engagements?
Cynicum—Of course. The longer a man is engaged, the less time he has to be married.

“What’s a cowboy?” asked Fangle’s seven-year-old boy. “I know,” replied five-year-old Freddy, before Fangle could answer; “it’s a bull.”

Nell—A girl shouldn’t marry a man till she knows all about him. **Belle**—Good gracious! If she knew all about him she wouldn’t want to marry him.

Little Freddie (after listening to parental quarrel)—Mamma, if a little boy is very, very good, does he have to get married when he is grown up?

Messenger—Who’s the swell ye was talking to, Jimmie? **Newsboy**—Aw! Him an’ me’s worked together for years. He’s the editor o’ one o’ my papers.

Mistress—I don’t want you to have so much company. You have more callers in a day than I have in a week. **Domestic**—Well, mum, perhaps if you’d try to be a little more agreeable you’d have as many friends as I have.

Broad—By the way, old man, do you remember borrowing \$10 from me six months ago? **Short**—Yes. **Broad**—And you said you only wanted it for a short time. **Short**—And I told the truth. I didn’t keep it twenty minutes.

“Do you ever wish you were a girl?” asked the visitor who was waiting in the reception room. “Only at Christmas time,” answered the boy, who was lingering in the doorway. “Why do you wish it, then?” “Because of the stockings they wear,” was the prompt reply.

If she would plight her troth, he said, he would go forth and battle with the cruel world, and when his fortune was made he would come and lay it at her feet. He would hustle—oh, how he would hustle, if—if she would but wait! But she would not. “B—but, Charley,” she said bashfully, “I will marry you now—and then you will have to hustle!”

A GALLANT RESCUE

By Col. Ralph Fenton

There seemed to be a more than ordinary bustle and excitement upon one of the wharfs of San Francisco one morning in the year 1850.

Since daybreak the "Blue Peter" had been flying from the mast of the steamer Golden Star, running to Panama, and already the engineers had begun to raise the steam.

This in itself was not so unusual an occurrence as to cause so much interest among the bystanders, but the fact was that, in spite of the precautions used to prevent it, a rumor had got aboard that over half a million dollars' value of gold formed part of her cargo.

The first excitement caused by the discovery of gold in the State had not yet subsided; emigrants were pouring in from all quarters, but few had yet begun to return, and at ten o'clock, which was the hour fixed for the steamer to sail, the total number of passengers amounted to two.

These were an old gentleman named Ashton and his only daughter. His daughter was a most beautiful girl of not more than eighteen. Just as the gangways were being hauled in, and the hawsers cast off, a young man broke through the crowd, and making his way to where the captain was standing, asked if he would allow him to work his passage to the Isthmus.

A fresher specimen of a broth of a boy from the old sod is seldom seen. The captain willingly granted his request at once. He was very short-handed, and as he cast his eyes upon the men comprising his crew a shade of anxiety came upon his face. With the exception of the officers they were all green hands, and a more villainous-looking set it would be hard to find.

The young Irishman, who gave his name as Mike Mahoney, was placed as assistant to the cook, and in an hour or two the captain had probably forgotten his very existence.

For more than four days after passing the Golden Gate no sign of any mutinous feeling could be seen among the crew, and the officers began to hope their fears had been without foundation. For some time Mike Mahoney had been trying to get a chance to say a word in private to the captain, but this it seemed impossible to do.

At last he plucked up courage, and advancing to where the captain stood on deck, made a shame-faced bow and pulled the forelock of his hair respectfully.

"Av ye plase, sir," he said, "wud ye be after lettin' me spake wid ye for a minute or two?"

"Well, say away," the captain answered. "What is it?"

"It is something of importance that I wish to tell you alone." The captain started back in utter surprise at the sudden difference in the tone and voice of the speaker. He could see in an instant from the earnest look upon the young man's face that the request was no idle one.

"Come to my cabin in half an hour," he said.

When at the time appointed Mike presented himself, he found the captain seated at the table with a decanter of wine before him. He was evi-

dently curious to learn the nature of the young Irishman's communication, but hardly had the door been closed upon his entrance than it was again thrown open, and the first and second mate, accompanied by a half a dozen or more of the crew, rushed into the cabin.

Before Mike could utter a word one of the sailors had seized him by the throat, while the two officers caught his arms so that to move was impossible. The next instant, however, two heavy blows from behind felled the two officers senseless to the floor, and the captain also found his arms pinioned to his side.

"What is the meaning of this?" he gasped.

"It means," one of the men answered with a hoarse laugh, "that the ship is ours, and you are all our prisoners."

While he was speaking himself and his companions had been busy lashing the captain's hands and feet firmly together as well as those of the young Irishman and the two officers, who were beginning to slowly recover from the effects of the blow dealt them. There was need for no explanation now that the steamer and the treasure were in the hands of the mutineers.

With one of the mutineers holding a loaded revolver on either side of them, the engineers were forced to keep the engines working, while the vessel's course was changed in the direction of the islands of the Pacific. The prisoners were at once confined in separate cabins, and those of the mutineers who were not on duty assembled in the main cabin to carouse over the success of their nefarious scheme.

The stateroom allotted to Miss Ashton opened from the main cabin in which the debauch was taking place, and every word they uttered could be distinctly overheard by the young girl.

"The girl is mine," she heard one of the ruffians say. "I am willing to give up my share of the swag, but the girl I will have."

"The deuce you say!" struck in another; "the girl is just as much public property as the rest of the cargo, and we'll have to throw for the chance to court her first."

The proposition seemed to be received more favorably, and she could hear the rattle of the dice, mingling with the clink of the glasses, and the foul oaths that were proceeding from their lips.

As she listened, a determination came over her to die by her own act, if needs be, before the hand of one of the miscreants should touch her.

The conversation of the wretches in the outer cabin had told her that her father had also been made a prisoner, and that his life, like the rest, had been spared for the present, in view of a storm or other emergency arising, when their help would be required to assist in working the vessel.

From their words she could gather the exact position of the cabins where they were confined, and the thought flashed through her mind that if she were once at liberty she could also set them free. Looking all around, such an idea seemed worse than hopeless, as the only window in the cabin was hardly wide enough to admit of a cat passing through.

Suddenly the remembrance came to her mind that a large bowie-knife her father had been used to carry in the rough state of life in the mines had been placed in a small satchel which stood in the corner of the cabin. It was only a lucky chance but at the time it seemed to her to be a

little less than a special interposition of Providence in her behalf.

By this time it was beginning to grow dark. This was another fact in her favor, and seizing the large, keen-edged ablde, with the energy of desperation she began to hack at the woodwork surrounding the small sash. Every moment in an agony of terror she expected that the ruffians in the outer cabin would open the door and surprise her in the act.

At last, however, she had enlarged the aperture enough to squeeze her body through, and with an earnest feeling of gratitude she at last stood upon the deck, with the cool night wind fanning her brow. With an unworded prayer throbbing from her heart, she crept along the shadow to the cabins where the prisoners were confined.

Without being discovered, she reached the door, but then a circumstance not thought of before flashed through her mind, causing a feeling of utter despair. The doors were locked and she had no key to open them.

She stood for an instant or two overwhelmed by this unexpected frustration of her plan, and then, with a feeling of desperation she turned and entered the captain's cabin, the door of which stood ajar. Her good angel must have been guiding her actions, for it was empty, while on the table lay a bunch of keys.

Seizing them, she again made her way to the cabin where the prisoners were confined, and in an instant the lock of the first was turned, and the door swung open on its hinges. It chanced to be that of the young Irishman, and in another second or two the ropes securing him were cut, and he stood at liberty.

A rapid motion of his hand and a pair of false gums fastened in his mouth were taken out, changing the whole expression of his face in a moment. Never was metamorphosis more complete. The Hibernian's expression had vanished, and the girl, with a little gasping cry of mingled joy and incredulity, exclaimed:

"Am I dreaming? Charles!"

"Yes, my darling," he answered hurriedly, "your own Charles, who loves you better than his life."

There was, however, but little time for explanations or tender speeches, and without any loss of time the remaining cabins were opened and the inmates set at liberty. Leaving the heroic girl, whom the reaction of the agitation she had undergone was beginning to overpower, in the captain's cabin, the four released captives and the ex-Irish boy crept away in the darkness toward the engine-room.

Crawling stealthily upon the mutineers on guard, they sprang upon them, and before their amazement would permit them to utter a word their weapons were wrested from them and they were made prisoners. Then, with the captured revolvers in their hands, they made their way to the doors of the cabin in which the remaining ruffians were still deep in their debauch, and, standing on the threshold with the weapons leveled, barred all means of egress.

The mutineers, taken wholly by surprise, and muddled by the liquor they had been drinking, were unable to offer any resistance, and went down before the deadly aim of the three officers and their two companions like sheep in the shambles. Out of the fourteen or fifteen in the saloon

when the fight commenced, but five remained to be placed in irons when it was ended.

The steamer was again headed on its original course, and the following morning a steamer bound for San Francisco came in sight, from which enough men were procured to work the vessel to its destination, which it reached in less than a week afterward.

As for the so-called Mike Mahoney, his real name was Charles Harper, and he had loved Miss Ashton since she was a child. Her father had not approved of the match, however, and the young man had started for California to try in that land of fortunes to gain one that would enable him to aspire, without the charge of presumption, to the hand of the girl he loved.

Having learned that she and her father were to return home in the Golden Star, and knowing the character of the crew, he had assumed the character of an Irishman, the better to mix with them unsuspected, and frustrate their designs.

All is well that ends well, however, and in New York papers of some months later was seen the notice of a marriage, in which a Miss Ashton and Charles Harper were the parties chiefly interested.

PSYCHOLOGISTS' TRICK MACHINES TEST MEN'S PECULIAR ABILITIES

Midwestern psychologists from a dozen universities gathered at Northwestern University recently and discussed everything from the mystery of sleep to the mental qualifications that determine a good baseball catcher. They are getting away from historic conceptions, undertaking what President Walter Dill Scott refers to as the creation of a new epoch in America, the study of individual differences.

There was Prof. Max Meyer of the University of Missouri, who has invented a machine for use in industrial intelligence tests, which he thinks solves the problem of selecting taxicab drivers, aviators or baseball players with equal certainty. It consists of a pump and a diving bell and the problem is to keep the bell from reaching bottom or surface, using both hands and obeying a signal.

There are linguistic tests for students, tests which estimate musical talent in two hours and save many years of hopeless practicing, and trick questions supposed to measure general intelligence or alertness.

The peculiar ability of Red Grange was explained by Prof. Griffith through the player's mental quickness in seeing not only holes in the line that were obvious, but those about to form.

The theory of preparing any man for any job is held wrong. Selection and education, some call it re-education or reconditioning, must be the method of the new age.

Prof. H. M. Johnson of the Mellon Institute at Pittsburgh, told of his experiments in sleep.

"The average rest during sleep," he said, "is eleven and one-half minutes, when repose is absolute. The remainder of the time there is either muscular or mental action. When a person dreams there is no muscular rest. Only three persons out of the 10,000 examined could lie absolutely still for two hours at a time."

CURRENT NEWS

AUTOMATIC MATHEMATICS

An instrument resembling a watch has been invented in Hungary by the aid of which it is possible instantly to compute the interest at any rate on any given sum of money for any length of time.

PONY ELUDES BOATS IN BAY

After ferryboats, police launches, Coast Guard cutters, tugs and rowboats had fruitlessly pursued Kusar, a polo pony, who plunged off a ferryboat at Governor's Island, N. Y., for three-quarters of an hour, the pony decided to save himself and swam ashore off Fort Jay.

EAGLE CAPTURED AT SEA

A black and white eagle was brought to this port recently by the steamer Suanierco, which arrived from Porto Rico. The bird, after following the vessel fifty miles, dropped exhausted on the bridge deck and was captured.

The eagle, which has a five-foot wing spread, will be presented to the Franklin Park Zoo.

FUEL FROM RUBBISH

Converting rubbish into fuel is cheaper than throwing it away, according to estimates made recently by an English engineer. His plan is to remove the tin cans, crush the refuse into powder, and then press it into little bricks which can be treated with tar oil or coal to aid ignition. He estimates the cost at \$1.80 per ton, while the present disposal cost is \$1.75 a ton.

SAND-FILLED MARBLE

A large pocket of sand was discovered recently in a solid block of marble at Middlebury, Vt. This sand is unlike any found in that vicinity. It is like beach sand. Geologists who have looked at it say that the marble was formed under water and probably the sand was caught in the centre of the formation.

BIGGEST WINE BARREL

The famous Heidelberg wine barrel, once the largest of its kind in the world, is surpassed in size by a new barrel at Eltvile-on-the-Rhine. It holds 283,800 quarts of Rhine wine. It is 49 feet long, 23 feet wide and nearly 10 feet high. The Heidelberg barrel has been dry for many years, but in the days of its usefulness it held 200,768 quarts.

STEEL COTTAGES

In England modest houses all of steel are meeting the needs of workmen of small means. And now, in months, steel barns and steel bungalows have been making their appearance in increasing numbers in the United States, according to Popular Science Monthly.

In Tarrytown, N. Y., for example, there has just been completed a novel dwelling in which the entire framework is formed of "metal lumber" riveted in the shop, transported to the site, and there bolted together. The builders declare that any person who knows how to use a monkey wrench, plumb line and carpenter's square can

easily erect the frame for the house by following the plans.

SHERIDAN'S SEVEN-WORD SPEECH

General Phil Sheridan was a man of such few words that he needed only seven to make an address to the graduates at West Point on one occasion, Captain Nelson Thomasson, Commander of the Illinois Commandery of the Loyal Legion, has disclosed.

"After the others had made long speeches," the captain related to his companions of the Loyal Legion when they laid a wreath on Sheridan's statue here, "Sheridan stepped forward to the table where the enrolled sheepskins were lying on top of each other and made this brief address in seven words:

"Young gentlemen, you are one of us."

"Then he distributed the diplomas to the anxious West Pointers without any further delay."

MAGNET SLOWS DOWN AUTOS AT CROSSINGS

A novel and fascinating idea came to Charles Adler of Baltimore, Md., one evening not long ago, as he sat by his laboratory window and watched the twinkling lights of commuters' trains flashing by in the railroad yards below. He contrasted their orderly operation with the helter-skelter rush of home-going automobiles on the road that crossed the railroad tracks at the end of the yard.

"Why not," he thought, "apply a little signal engineering to the problem of preventing auto accidents at grade crossings? Surely there must be some way to keep the reckless driver from committing suicide—force him to drive carefully whether he wants to or not."

Adler set to work to solve the problem. As a result, he has invented a system that automatically slows down the fast-driven car as it approaches the railroad crossings. No matter how hard the driver steps on the throttle, the car will not travel at a speed greater than fifteen miles an hour until it has passed the crossing.

The device, says Popular Science Monthly, consists essentially of a powerful magnet concealed in a concrete box beneath the surface of the roadway at the proper distance from the railroad crossing. As the approaching car passes over a magnet, the latter operates a system of relays and a governor so designed that it will allow current to flow through the automobile ignition system at speeds below fifteen miles an hour, but cuts it off when the car is traveling faster than that rate.

This action continues until another road magnet at the danger point is reached, when the ignition circuit is restored to its normal path. The road magnets are made up of flat strips of magnetized steel, placed side by side in the concrete beneath the road surface.

This remarkable invention may help to solve other important traffic problems besides that of the railroad grade crossing. Controlling magnets could be placed at any point where slow and careful operation of automobiles is necessary for the public safety.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

WHERE BAD EGGS GO

Eggs that are worthless so far as food value goes, are not wasted by the large dealers, but are covered with kerosene after being broken, treated with boric acid and sold to tanneries for use in one of the first processes of making leather. The shells are removed by sieves and the egg mixture is placed in a revolving drum with the raw hides to make them pliant.

FORD BUYS HOOPSKIRTS FOR HIS TWO MUSEUMS

Henry Ford came to Doylestown, Pa., recently and purchased \$3,000 worth of hoopskirts, grain flails and varied relics of early farm life among the Pennsylvania Dutch.

The antiques, Mr. Ford explained, are for his Dearborn, Mich., museum and also for his Wayside Inn, near Boston, formerly the old Longfellow home.

STRANGE SEA ILLNESS

A mysterious disease has appeared in Germany recently and has caused so much excitement that the Prussian Lower House has appropriated \$120,000 to have it scientifically investigated. This new affliction attacks fishermen in that part of the Baltic known as "The Haff."

It grips its victims when they are at sea, suddenly and without warning. Severe pains in the muscles of the arms and legs are followed by temporary paralysis. The attack ceases within a few hours after the patient is once more on land, but is apt to break out again as soon as he goes to sea. No adequate explanation has yet been found for it.

INSPIRED BY "COFFEE COCKTAIL" TO LEAD MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

"Coffee cocktails" are said to be a new drink, prepared by laborers who occupy camps in this country. It is reported that the drinks are made from a preparation for heating, which is melted and mixed with coffee.

Samuel Wickens of Mount Vernon, who was before Judge H. B. Merritt at Goshen today on the charge of public intoxication, told the Court that he had some of the coffee mixture and that was what ailed him.

He got wild and started to lead the Memorial Day parade at Goshen, imagining he was a great personage. He said he did not know anything of what happened after he drank the coffee concoction until he woke up in a cell at Goshen today.

He received ten days' suspended sentence and promised "never to do so again."

PICKPOCKET SCHOOL FOR PARIS GIRLS FOUND

The days of Fagin and Oliver Twist were recalled today by the discovery by Paris detectives of a regular school for pickpockets.

Dickens only imagined an establishment frequented by boy pupils, but feminine emancipation today seems even to have invaded the criminal classes, for the thieves' academy which the police unearthed was of girl students exclusively.

Furthermore, the "college," which was situated in a slum misappropriately called "Rue du Bel Air," was run by two women teachers—Amanda Godart and Kerthe Raulin.

While these "professors" were taken to jail, detectives were busy searching for their scattered pupils, mostly about 10 to 12 years old, made expert in extracting purses from handbags in crowded department stores or collecting samples of silks and other merchandise displayed on counters.

BULL WINS IN KENTUCKY COURT ON A PLEA OF SELF-DEFENSE

In the only case on record, it is believed, in which a bull was defendant, the bull won here the other day in Circuit Court on a self-defense plea. Damages were denied by a jury to Cleveland Snelling, who had brought suit for \$10,000 damages against the Idle Hour Stock Farm, owner of the bull, and David Caskill, on whose farm it was kept.

The defense was set up that Snelling had assaulted the bull and that the animal was merely protecting itself when the bull knocked Snelling down, loosening his teeth and breaking four ribs. Defense also was to the effect that ordinarily the bull was mild-mannered, had never attacked anyone and did not molest Snelling until the latter threw a rock and struck him.

That part of the suit as against the Idle Hour farm was dismissed on peremptory instructions, as it was shown there was no negligence on the part of the owner, Colonel E. R. Bradley, also owner of Bubbling Over, winner of the 1926 Kentucky Derby.

OLD DEVIL SEA

"Th' old Devil Sea has got my dad,
My man an' my brothers
But I have taken an oath, my son,
That she'll never lay hands on you!"
Then wrapping her babe in a plaided shawl
And holding her child to her breast,
She hastened away from the crashing sea
Far into the shadowy west.

"I hear strange things in th' wind this night!"
Sighed the lad, when the years were done,
And his mother lifted her startled eyes
To gaze on her stalwart son;
"There may be a storm," she answered him,
As he stared at the crackling fire,
"I hear but th' talk of th' tremblin' trees,
As they lean to th' cattle byre."

"There are voices that call an' call to me!"
Softly the lad would say,
As he wearily turned from the fields he plowed
In the dusk of the dying day,
Till his mother wept in the door alone
And wailed to the waking dawn,
"Th' old Devil Sea has won my lad!
He has heard her—an' he has gone!"

EDGAR DANIEL KRAMER.

FROM EVERYWHERE

CORRECT TIME

In Geneva a chronometer competition is held every year at the observatory. Last year the chronometer that made the best record kept time within six one-hundredths of a second a day.

EARLIEST KNOWN BAKER

Ching-Noung is reputed to have been the original teacher of how to make bread from wheat and wine from rice, about 1918 B. C. Baking of bread was known in patriarchal times and became a profession in Rome in 170 B. C.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

The site of ancient Carthage is being sold off and divided into building lots, and the surrounding hills, rich in history, are being slowly covered with residential villas.

DOUBLE CONTROL FOR AUTOS

Paris has transferred the airplane idea of double control to automobiles and now the men who attend the French school for chauffeurs are trained in automobiles that have two steering wheels, two horns, and two foot brake pedals—but apparently only one gear shift control. The scheme is said to save much time and trouble in developing competent chauffeurs.

TELEPHONES IN FRANCE

In France, with a population of 40,000,000 people, the telephone is so poorly developed that two telephone directories will contain the names of all the subscribers. The Government, which operates the service, issues one directory for Paris and one for the rest of the country. Both books together contain fewer names than there are in the Chicago Telephone Directory.

AN INVENTOR OF A FAMOUS TOY DIES

Fraulein Gretel Steiff, who brought joy to so many million nurseries, is worthy of mention in these or any other columns. The invention by her of the "Teddy Bear Doll" will go down into history with Rose O'Neill's "Kewpies," the "Kid-die Car" and a few other little things which make life happy for children. The inventors' toll on such devices is enormous.

BURMA STORM DEATHS 2,800

The death roll of the recent cyclone and tidal wave on the coast of Burma has reached 2,800, according to the commissioner of the district of Arakan. It is feared that the total deaths will reach almost 4,000 in the affected regions. Most of the deaths in the township of Maungdaw were caused by the Naaf River sweeping over its banks—a waste of waters for many miles.

Extensive damage has been caused to the telegraph lines connecting Burma with India. Floods are impeding the progress of rescue workers.

HER LONG HAIR CAUSED INJURIES

Friends of Jean Weiner, 25 years old, of 2871 West Thirty-fifth Street, Brooklyn, repeatedly

urged her to bob her hair, but she always replied that she preferred it long. Recently, as she was working at a bookbinding machine at 207 West Twenty-fifth Street several strands of her hair became entangled in the gears and she was severely cut and bruised before the machine could be stopped. She was taken to New York Hospital.

SUGAR RESTORES HEART

The injection of sugar into the veins of patients apparently dying from heart failure and exhaustion from various diseases not only restores the heart action, but produces a remarkable improvement in the general condition. Such is the substance of a communication from Doctor Enriquez of the Hospital de la Pitie to the Academy of Medicine tonight. The results in many cases are said to have been almost miraculous, and no ill-effects whatsoever were experienced.

ONE WHISTLE FOR A TOWN

East St. Louis now has the biggest steam whistle in the world. It is a remarkable triple machine with three voices—a three-chime whistler, whose capacity for the annihilation of peace is extraordinary. This whistle blows a ten-mile blast at half steam, and with favorable wind has a disturbing power of twenty miles. It costs a dollar every time it is blown. But this great whistle is not all noise. It is an idea in economy, a whistle trust; a noise combine. Almost all the little noises, yelps, toots, and whines of smaller mechanical throats in East St. Louis are now dumb. The giant whistle trust whistles for them. The independent whistles have to whistle off time to be heard. Within the range of this whistle are said to be 100,000 people who tell time by it. This remarkable whistle has been installed by the East St. Louis and Suburban Electric Railway Company at the Belt power-house, State and Twentieth streets, where the company's machine shops and car barns are located. The greatest modern siren comprises three whistles. The largest is almost six feet in height, and nearly as big around as a man. On each side of the main one is a smaller whistle. The three units combine to make one noise, with which even Babanne, miles away, across the Mississippi River, in the west end of St. Louis, is well acquainted. This big triple whistler was also set up at the railway company's electrical generating station "as a feature." It is connected with an electric clock, which is regulated by the Government standard time sent out from Washington on the dropping of a ball at exactly noon each day. The electric clock which connects with the whistle is guaranteed not to vary five seconds in time a year, and the clock's record to date is satisfactory. Almost every man looks at his watch when the first blast is sounded by the big whistle at seven o'clock in the morning. Almost every housewife in East St. Louis glances at her mantel timepiece when the siren woos noon—the second blast of the day. The third blast is an hour later, and the last is at six in the evening.

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